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ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN, Editor

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MID-MAY ADVENTURE

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MAY 3
1918

Adventure

VOL·17
NO·3

MAN to MAN

A Complete Novelette by

ARTHUR D·HOWDEN SMITH

Author of "Contraband Matrimony," "Claymore," etc.

WITH a thrill that was almost a shudder, Elsie Chambers turned from the bulletin-board that hung on the landing of the first cabin's main companionway. Under the heading, "Notice to Passengers," this warning was typed in red:

> We shall be entering the zone of submarine operations tonight. Passengers are advised not to remove any of their outer clothing and to make sure that life-preservers are handy. In event of the alarm being given, proceed at once to the life-boat assigned to you.
>
> HARLEY, LIEUT. COM., R. N. R.,
> MASTER.

"Bit of a shock, isn't it, Miss Chambers?" said a cheery voice behind her, and Bullen, the first officer, leaped up the stairs from the dining-saloon. "No matter how much you have thought of it before, the first time through is no joke."

"I'm not afraid," retorted Elsie Chambers, as she gave easily to the roll of the old *Greenland*, climbing over the Atlantic combers at a steady fifteen knots.

Bullen's clean, plain-featured English face creased into a smile that made him almost handsome.

"I'm sure you are not," he agreed. "By Jove, you American girls are plucky! Wish you were in with us in this."

"I don't see how I could be any more in it than I am," returned Elsie, snatching at the companionway railing to meet a sideways dip.

Bullen caught her arm and steadied her with the instinctive sureness of the seaman.

"Here I am, now, daring the submarines, and if I ever reach Europe I shall be in one of our hospitals until the end of the war. But don't you worry about my people.

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They'll be in it, yet. Give us a chance, Mr. Bullen. We're young at this game, you must remember."

"You'll do," he answered humorously. "Are you going on deck, Miss Chambers?"

She nodded, and he climbed the stairs beside her, pausing at the top to adjust the black curtain that hooded the single light burning in the well of the companionway. This masked effectively, he opened the door to the promenade-deck, which stretched before them dark and almost tenantless. The old *Greenland* was not a comfortable craft at best, and in these war times, with the torpedo of the submarine a constant threat, there were seldom more than twenty or thirty passengers in the two cabins.

"Will you go forward with me?" asked Bullen, offering his arm. "I must get back to the bridge and give the Old Man a chance for a bite. He can't leave the chart-room, and he won't sleep a wink from now until we make port."

"The poor man!" exclaimed Elsie. "Yes, I'll be glad of company, Mr. Bullen. I suppose there'll be no sleep for you, either?"

" 'Fraid not. This is a dog's life in the merchant service. I've applied for transfer to the navy, but they need officers too much for munition-carriers like the *Greenland*. No chance of glory for me."

He spoke ruefully, and she flashed back with ready sympathy:

"Oh, but Mr. Bullen, I think it is simply splendid! You go back and forth, week after week—this is your twelfth war-voyage, you told me—and if it were not for you, how could the armies and fleets fight? You run far more risk than the men in your navy, at that, for you are always in danger and you can't fight back."

"I say, you are awfully ripping," he acknowledged gratefully. "I dare say you are right in a way. But of course one can't really feel satisfied about it unless one is in the actual row, don't you know. And then one's people, you know, they—sometimes, they don't understand, either.

"I'm a public-school man, and practically every chap in my form is under fire. I met one in London last time I was across. Rigged up in khaki and all, cane and the military cross, too. By Jove! 'How are you, Bullen?' was the only word he had for me. Thought I was a slacker, I fancy. It's that sort of thing gets under one's skin, you know."

"I know just how you feel," assented Elsie, "and I think you and every man on this boat should have the military cross for every voyage you make. It's far more heroic than—than capturing trenches."

They had strolled forward to the foot of the ladder that led up to the bridge. Ahead of them they could just make out the bulk of the foremast towering into the air. It was a thick night and the fo'c's'le was a place of shadowy outlines, blurred and indistinct.

"Thanks for all that you've said," began Bullen. "It's a——"

He stumbled and felt for words.

"It helps a lot to know that some one realizes one's troubles. I——"

"Ship ahoy!" rang the hail from the crow's-nest above them. "Dead ahead, sir! Put your helm over! Hard over!"

Bullen forgot his stammered thanks and dashed up the bridge-ladder, without stopping to apologize for his desertion. Elsie clutched a bridge stanchion and waited in mingled horror and tingling zest of adventure for what should happen next. To think that she, Elsie Chambers, who ten days before had never been farther away from Coshocton than Chicago, was now in the midst of the North Atlantic, threatened by shipwreck and submarines! She had to pinch herself to believe it could be true.

ON THE bridge footsteps pattered back and forth. She heard Bullen's voice, crisp and incisive, and the deeper tones of Captain Harley, a bearded, retiring old sea-dog whom the passengers had scarcely seen. There was no confusion. Forward on the fo'c's'le she could hear the men of the watch on duty as they rushed to the rails to look for the menace glimpsed from the crow's-nest.

Then, almost paralyzing in its unexpected suddenness, a finger of light stabbed forward over the bow. Back and forth it swung, hovering on green wave-tops and patches of spumy foam, and came to rest on something shapeless and inert, something almost animal and alive, that wallowed under the *Greenland's* forefoot.

Elsie leaned far over the side-rail, and looked down as the menace slid past, distinct under the pencil of light. She had a brief picture of a broad deck, littered and tangled, broken masts and snarled rigging, the wreck of what once had been a ship.

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Then the searchlight went out, and the menace disappeared utterly, swallowed up in the starless void of the night.

"Derelict," she heard Bullen saying on the bridge. "A —— close call, that, sir."

"Too close," returned Captain Harley's bass voice. "I'm thinking more of the light than that dead ship."

"Couldn't be helped, sir," Bullen reassured him. "We had to make certain where he was. If that fellow had ever bumped us he would have crushed our whole bow. I saw planks stacked on his deck, and you know what sodden weight those lumber schooners swing."

"Aye, but he hadn't been long deserted," answered Captain Harley. "Did you mark that? He still rode high and there were no weeds on his hull. He ——"

The voices passed out of hearing as the officers crossed to the other wing of the bridge, and Elsie Chambers shook herself back to a realization of the present. She stretched her arms over the rail, and drew in a long, long breath of the salty air.

"Oh, Sea, Sea," she whispered, "how I love you! You have brought me the mystery and joy of adventure! I haven't had to wait for France. Oh, Sea, I love you!"

SHE was only twenty-two, you see, and she had spent all her life in Coshocton, except the period of hospital-training in Chicago—and hospital-training does not leave much time for exploring the by-ways of life. Her's was the zest of the maiden explorer, and she longed for opportunities to match herself against the hazards of the Unknown. Virginal, clear-eyed, dauntlessly unafraid, she poised on the heaving deck, eager for whatever the future might unfold.

How long she stood there Elsie did not know. The ship's bell on the fo'c's'le was quiet. The only sounds that came to her were the pulsing of the *Greenland's* engines, the light tapping of feet on the bridge overhead and an occasional murmur of voices from officers or quartermasters. Gradually, the wind died down and shifted. The waves moderated, and a few stars crept trembling from under their blankets of storm-clouds. One arm encircling a stanchion, Elsie stood silent through it all, until —most unromantic moment—acute pains warned her that her feet were going to sleep.

Reluctantly, she retraced her steps along the deck to the main companionway, where a steward was now on duty to guard the shrouded light. He stifled a yawn to return her greeting with a "Good night, miss!" and she dived into the rabbit-warren of passageways leading to the state-rooms. Her own room was on B deck, the deck below the promenade deck. Owing to the scanty passenger-list, she had it to herself.

When she entered she switched on the electric light, a luxury permissable because the porthole was painted black and bolted down from the outside, passengers being expected to secure ventilation by leaving their doors ajar. Mechanically, she cast aside her cap and cloak, undid her hair and started to slip off her skirt. But as she stepped from the garment the words of the captain's notice on the bulletin-board flashed into her mind.

"Passengers are advised not to remove any of their outer clothing and to make sure that life-preservers are handy."

Elsie's dreams of romance were dissipated on the spot. She hastily redid her hair and adjusted her skirt again, then stooped and dragged the life-preserver from its place under the bunk. She was on her knees, studying the straps and buckles of the unwieldy contrivance, when there came a shock that pitched her sideways against the tank at the base of the washstand.

The *Greenland* heeled over to port, the floor slanted and she slid into a corner. After the shock came the roar of an explosion which was drowned instantly in the hiss of escaping steam. The electric light went out like a charred match.

Hands clasped to her aching head, Elsie fumbled to her knees. She tried to think coherently. What had happened? What should she do? Oh, yes, of course. The *Greenland* had been torpedoed. How silly of her not to have realized it at once! The thing to do was to collect her life-preserver and a wrap and get on deck at once.

She started to hunt for the life-preserver, and remembered her electric torch which she kept on the toilet-rack above the washstand. It was still there and the cheery ray from its small battery quieted her first panic-instinct. She slipped the life-preserver over her shoulders, buckled it and swung a golf-cape over all. Over her hair she drew a woolen skating-cap.

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"Neat, but not lovely," she murmured to herself, unable to resist a glance at the mirror.

Torch in one hand, with regained confidence, she turned the knob of her door. It refused to open. She pulled harder, made sure bolt and lock were not fastened, and pulled again with all her force. Still it would not open. For the first time she was really afraid.

The *Greenland* lurched back from port to starboard, with a pronounced list. That terrible hissing of steam continued, dominating every other noise. It was as if the engines of the steamer in their agony were bellowing a call for help that would not come. Suppose no help came for her, either. Elsie reflected swiftly. Barred in this tiny room, helpless, alone, the ship sinking under her, drowning staring her in the face!

She wanted to scream. She opened her lips—and caught a glimpse of her ashen face and quivering features in the mirror. A wave of self-disgust welled up in her. Was this the way to face the Great Adventure? She remembered her first operation—how she had fought the nausea induced by sight of the gouts of blood the surgeons so deftly had checked.

She recalled the first man she had helped to die, and the overpowering sense of helplessness that had followed. But that man had died without whimpering, and life had meant as much to him as it did to her. The sturdy will that hardy ancestors had bred in her snapped back to mastery, with the ready resilience of youth.

Elsie drew a deep breath. She was herself. She faced the dreadful situation unafraid. Let the worst happen, if it must. She was ready to die like a woman, not like a trapped beast.

With returning self-control, her intelligence sprang to the fore. She looked about her for some weapon with which to force the door. The deck was twisted and splintered from the shock of the explosion, and it was evident that strenuous means were necessary, if the door was to be battered down. The nearest thing to hand, and the most practicable, was the tank of the washstand, which slid in grooves like a drawer. It was of wood, metal-lined, an awkward affair, but solid. She took it by the handle and one corner, and drove blow after blow at the jammed door.

The results were disappointing. Not even a crack rewarded her onslaught. And when she tugged at the knob it seemed as if her efforts had served only to wedge the door tighter. She tried once more, this time hammering at the jamb, hoping to demolish the leverage that held the door in place. When she desisted, panting for breath, she had achieved no further progress.

The demon of panic stirred in her heart again. A sob wracked her. What was the use? She had done her best. It was hopeless. She collapsed weakly on the splintered tank and tried to collect her thoughts. The hissing of steam still filled her ears, and at first she did not notice the rattling of the door-knob. When she did she leaped to her feet with a shriek of joy and pounded on the panel with her fists.

There came a rap from the other side in reply, and then a thundering blow. She stood back, huddled by the bunk, as blow after blow rained on the wood. Presently the edge of a fire-ax shored through. Her rescuer tried the knob without avail and changed his tactics, pounding at the lower section, next the jamb. The door gave. Huge chunks of wood were hewed from it. It tottered, swung inward and fell.

ELSIE started up. The dim figure of a man stood in the doorway.

"Somebody in here?" he asked, breathing hard.

It was Bullen.

"It's I," said Elsie meekly.

"Oh! Miss Chambers? Lucky for you I happened to come through this corridor again and heard you through all that infernal racket from the engine-room."

"What has happened, please?"

"We're torpedoed, scuppered, done for—good as sunk. Come along, please. No time to waste."

He seized her by the arm and guided her along the slanting passage toward the main companionway. All was darkness. The ship was deserted, apparently. It heeled over and its engines hissed and groaned like some huge sea-beast in agony.

"Where are we going?" panted Elsie.

"No. 4 boat. That's mine. No time to find yours."

"It is mine."

"Oh, good. Save confusion, then. We must hurry faster, please."

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He took the companion-way at a bound, and she flew beside him. As they came on deck all the boats on that side, the starboard side, were lowered, except one forward toward the bridge.

"There we are," said Bullen with satisfaction. "That's mine. They are waiting for us."

He started forward. Suddenly a sharp report rang out from the darkness that covered the sea and a missile shrilled overhead. *Whee-ee-ee-ing!* Then *bang! smash!* And metal fragments pelted the deck.

"Shrapnel," exclaimed Bullen. "The scoundrelly Hun! He must be shooting at our wireless. Oh, the cursed coward! Can't he give our people a chance to get clear?"

He started to run.

"We must find cover," he urged.

Again the whine of a shell, and the spatter of bursting fragments. But this explosion was followed by a jar aloft, and in the wake of the shrapnel pellets followed a hail of splinters from the wrecked foremast. Elsie felt a pull on her arm, and turned to see Bullen sinking to the deck. Blood spouted from his head.

"Mr. Bullen!" she cried.

He pitched over in a faint. Madly, but with steady hands, she searched the wound to determine how serious it might be. In a minute her practised touch assured her it was a glancing blow, stunning in its immediate effect, but not necessarily dangerous. She glanced about her for aid.

The lights in No. 4 boat had vanished. She ran to the rail. No. 4 was just fending off from the *Greenland's* side. She was alone with Bullen on the sinking ship.

Alone!

Emotion choked her, but she fought it down.

"Wait," she shrieked in a queer strangled voice. "Wait! Oh, please wait!"

She screamed it again and again, but in the continued hissing of the shattered engines, the boat's-crew did not hear her, and they rowed away to the little group of lights formed by the other boats. Evidently, the occupants of No. 4, despairing of the arrival of the missing ones—perhaps supposing they had boarded some other boat—and frightened by the shelling of the liner, had made haste to leave such a dangerous locality.

A third shell exploded aft, and Elsie ran back to Bullen's side, wondering frantically how she could drag him to shelter. There was also danger that he might roll down the sloping deck and into the sea. She crouched over him, thinking with all her might. What should she do? What should she do?

Scarcely knowing what she did, she clasped her arms about his chest and started to pull him along the deck forward. She was a sturdy girl, deep-chested, strong-muscled, and even Bullen's dead-weight did not daunt her. Slowly she made progress away from the shells that were evidently aimed at the after aerial. Under the bridge she paused. Here she was reasonably safe, and the sight of the trail of blood Bullen had left behind him reminded her of his wound.

She turned up her skirt and tore linen from her person, fashioning a rude bandage that stanched the hemorrhage. The next thing to do was to revive him. Wedging Bullen safely between the bridge-stairs and a stanchion, she raced up the stairs to the liner's sanctum.

Like every other part of the ship it was deserted, and she fearlessly invaded the chart-house, vaguely illuminated by the glow of the binnacle-lamp. On a tray standing on a railed desk was a pot of coffee with a spirit-lamp still burning beneath it. A cup stood ready. In a cabinet over the desk Elsie saw a bottle which looked familiar. Yes, it was Scotch. Some store of the captain's kept for emergency. Well, this was an emergency. She tucked the bottle under her arm, took the coffee-pot in one hand and a cup in the other, and swiftly ran down the ladder to the promenade deck again.

THE firing had ceased. The steam was making less noise, and the *Greenland* was sinking slower than before. Bullen lay where she had left him, his face sadly gaunt and pale in the light of the little electrics.

Elsie disposed her cordials on the deck, stooped and lifted the man's head upon her lap. Next she poured whisky in the coffee-cup, and forced a trickle of it between his lips.

This process was certain, however tedious, and presently he coughed feebly. His head turned from side to side. He opened his eyes.

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"Now, don't bother, Mr. Bullen," she said soothingly. "It's all right. Drink some more."

He gazed at her dazedly, and sipped the fiery liquor. When he sputtered and refused it, she reached for the coffee-pot and filled the cup with this scalding hot drink. The two stimulants aroused him, pumped life through his veins, brought back reason to his glazed eyes.

"Where — am — I?" he murmured first.

"Here with me," replied Elsie, smiling. "You are not to worry—and drink some more of this."

She chuckled at the old-time ring of the professional admonition, and his eyes glinted with humor in reply.

"Is—it—funny?" he asked faintly.

"Well, some folks might think so," she said. "I don't know. I haven't quite made up my mind yet."

"We—the submarine—where——"

He struggled to a sitting position.

"Where is No. 4 boat?" he exclaimed.

"They have gone," she answered.

"Gone?" His brows furrowed in anger—and smoothed in response to the pain of his aching scalp. "But——"

"Don't you remember the shells? We were going to run for cover, but you were hit. The people in the boat must have been frightened; they lowered her and rowed away."

"We'll have to—do—something," he muttered.

"We will in a few minutes," she agreed. "You mustn't fret about it."

"But we'll sink."

"We haven't yet."

He made a futile attempt to stand up, and collapsed, almost fainting.

"See?" she urged. "You must go easy, Mr. Bullen. We shall find a way out presently."

"Don't—like—it," he said thickly. "Head—hurts—though. Can't——"

A lurid flash of light—red, green, yellow—leaped up into the night. A crash tore the deck beneath them. The *Greenland's* fabric buckled and collapsed. Everything seemed to fly apart. Elsie was stunned and awed. But in all the horror of the moment, Bullen staggered to his feet, clutching the nearest stanchion.

"Torpedoed—again," he gasped. "—— the—Huns! Good old—*Greenland.* Took more—than one blow—in her—vitals—to do—for her!"

He staggered there, waving one clenched fist at the darkness. The *Greenland* was settling rapidly. She had caved in amidships, almost sheared in two by the destruction wrought by the two torpedoes and the dragging weight of her loosened engines and boilers.

"—— the—Huns!" reiterated Bullen.

He began to sink down toward the deck, but Elsie stayed him.

"You mustn't faint again, Mr. Bullen," she cried. "Here——"

She reached for the whisky, but it had gone. She hesitated, then struck him a stinging blow in the face with the palm of her hand.

"Eh?" he said surprisedly.

"Remember the Huns!" she exclaimed in a burst of inspiration.

"Aye, that's it," he returned with unexpected force. "Remember—Huns!"

He tottered erect.

"Good—old—*Greenland*, —— Huns."

The *Greenland* dipped abruptly. She was going down in one sodden mass, almost on an even keel. But now without warning she started to side-slip. Elsie pinned Bullen to the stanchion he clung to, and snatched off her golf-cape. From it she ripped the cross-belts and fastened them around Bullen just below his armpits, hooking one arm into this improvised sling.

The deck was tipping at an acute angle, and she peered cautiously over-side. The water was only a few feet distant. By herself she would have jumped in, but she dared not run the risk of losing Bullen in the darkness. So she stood there, waiting for the liner to sink lower. And as she waited, it seemed that the *Greenland* had stopped sinking, that instead the water was coming up to meet her.

When it was only two feet away, she said to Bullen—

"Come!"

"Eh?" he answered stupidly.

"Jump with me," she commanded quietly.

She assisted him to climb over the rail, straddled it herself, and then paused irresolute. The water was so black, so cold! And the *Greenland*, even sinking to a certain doom, seemed more secure, more permanent.

She conquered her fear, and gave Bullen a slight push.

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"Jump," she ordered.

He obeyed her docilely as a child. She stepped off with him, and the ocean folded its clammy arms about her and whispered in her ear as she swam with quick, nervous strokes into the gloom. Behind her, with a final grinding and sucking turmoil, the *Greenland* sank slowly into the maw of the Atlantic. The swirling waters tugged at her heels, dragged her down. But she refused to give in. Fighting every second, she won to safety beyond the whirlpool's rim.

II

THE shock of the plunge brought Bullen back to his senses.

"I say," he protested, "you must let me go. Really, you must. I can't let you tow me like this. Take care of yourself."

"Save your breath," returned Elsie coolly.

A little wave splashed over them, and Bullen's answer ended in a splutter. He struggled weakly to break her hold on him, but she had a firm grip on the belt fastened around his chest.

"You will wear out both yourself and me," she warned him. "Help me, please."

"I won't," he cried weakly.

"You will," she panted. "I can't last very much longer if you don't help."

"Do—what—I—can," groaned Bullen. "Plucky bit—by Jove!"

And with this capitulation he bent what little strength remained to him to make her burden lighter. It was heavy enough, at best. Her skirts soon clogged about her feet, and she made an attempt to get rid of them; but this was impossible without casting off Bullen, and she feared to let him go for a second, sure he would contrive to float away in the darkness.

"Can you see the boats?" she asked him after ten minutes of futile paddling.

He waited until they were carried to the crest of a wave, whence their limited horizon was materially extended. There were no lights in sight, only a dim restless world of water.

"They have gone," he told her hopelessly.

But in a spasm of excitement she grasped his arm.

"What is that? Look! To the left!"

A long, humped-back shape loomed over a wave, as she spoke, dipped into a hollow and slowly rode the next comber. It was coming toward them.

"A submarine," gasped Bullen.

"Shout," she commanded hysterically. "Shout! As loud as you can! Perhaps they will hear us."

Her clear soprano swelled in a wild shriek that sliced through the subdued tumult of the waves. Bullen's call was faint by contrast, and he was soon discouraged, but Elsie called again and again. Presently, the submarine showed a light, and its speed diminished. Elsie struck out frantically to meet it, pulling Bullen after her. She made no progress worth mentioning, but the exercise served to keep the blood circulating in her numbing limbs.

A bell clanged somewhere in the submarine and it slid up beside them, its lean gray flanks glistening with moisture. From the bridge came a hail in English—

"Is there a woman there?"

"Yes, yes," cried Elsie. "Please throw me a rope."

The voice muttered a command in German and a light flashed down on them.

"*Himmel*," swore the voice. "There are two of you!"

"I can't last much longer," returned Elsie. "This man is wounded."

"A man, eh?" The voice took on a curiously cold, impersonal note. "I am afraid I can not take him. I would not leave a woman to drown, but we have no room for Englishmen on our U-boats."

Elsie stared up into the light. Its rays were in her eyes, and she could see nothing except a vague group of figures standing on top of the conning-tower that rose amidships of the weird craft.

"Then I don't want you to save me," she said contemptuously. "You—German!"

Bullen stammered an incoherent protest between chattering teeth.

"G-go—on. I'm—th-through."

And once more he tried to twist away from her. But she held him up and let herself drift slowly out of the circle of radiance beside the submarine.

"Wait!" called the voice that had spoken before.

More orders were barked in German, and Elsie heard the footsteps of men clambering over the submarine's steel deck.

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A rope swished down beside her, and with a creak a curved ladder was lowered to the water's edge.

"You will take this man aboard?" she asked, hesitating.

"Yes," replied the Teutonic voice above, crisply impatient. "Make haste."

But Elsie resolved to leave nothing to chance. She looped the rope under Bullen's armpits and helped him on to the ladder first, guiding his unsteady efforts as she followed him, until they had reached the narrow runway that extended from the conning-tower toward the bow of the submarine. Here several German sailors stood, who, not unkindly, helped them aft to a sort of bridge just forward of the conning-tower. Elsie was aware of a tall figure that looked down on her from the slight elevation, hands thrust jauntily into the pockets of a loose reefer, cap at a rakish angle.

"You are from the *Greenland*?" the tall man questioned.

His English was pure and correctly enunciated, with the barest hint of a guttural impediment.

"Yes," she answered, shivering, as much from the reaction of her nerves as from the bitter chill of the night wind and her soaking clothes.

"But the master told me all his people were accounted for," objected the German.

"We were overlooked in the confusion."

"Who are you?" the officer turned sharply to Bullen, leaning against the wall of the conning-tower.

"First—officer," said Bullen thickly.

"He was wounded by your shrapnel," added Elsie. "Can't you let us go inside? This man will die if he does not have attention."

The German shrugged.

"We will see what can be done. Follow me."

HE CLIMBED a short ladder and descended into the top of the conning-tower. Nobody moved to help Bullen, so Elsie bolstered him from below sufficiently to enable him to make the ascent. Climbing down inside the conning-tower was easier. At the bottom they found themselves in the midst of a mass of whirring machinery, underneath a platform on which stood the helmsman and the navigating officer. The tall German was waiting for them. By the light of the electric lamps Elsie saw that he was quite young, not more than twenty-eight, she judged, with a narrow, proud face, high cheek bones, a small mustache and deep-set, cool gray eyes.

"Follow me," he directed.

He led them along a corridor just wide enough for two persons to pass. The walls glinted with beads of oily sweat. At intervals electric lamps, protected by wire brackets, shone whitely. From behind several doors came the hum of motors and men's voices. There were metal signs in German, which Elsie could not read. Everything about them was metal, the floor, the walls, the low ceiling, even the doors that studded the corridor.

At the end of the corridor they emerged into a small saloon. It contained a table, two arm-chairs, fixed to the floor, and two benches, with leather cushions. The German motioned them to be seated, went to a locker and took from it a bottle of Dutch Schnapps. He poured out two glasses and offered a glass to each of them.

"Drink," he directed.

Elsie choked after two gulps of the strong stuff. Bullen downed his slowly, with evident satisfaction. His teeth were chattering like castanets.

The German watched them reflectively, tugging at his mustache.

"This is most irregular," he said irritably. "Most irregular. We are not supposed to give refuge to enemy persons on our U-boats. I would put back and transfer you to the *Greenland's* boats, but the English patrols are coming up."

"We shall be corpses very soon, and you will be relieved of your difficulty, unless we can get warm," said Elsie sharply.

"*Hein?*"

The German officer regarded her with wild amazement. He ceased to tug at his mustache. Evidently he was puzzled by this outspoken young woman.

"You heard what I said, sir," she retorted fiercely.

Afterward Elsie admitted to herself that the unaccustomed indulgence in Schnapps must have been responsible for at least part of her spunkiness.

"Look at Mr. Bullen's head. He and I have been in the water for half an hour. I should think you would offer to relieve us—even if we are enemy persons."

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At that moment, as if to accentuate her words, Bullen slumped sideways on to one of the benches.

"This man ought to be put to bed," stormed Elsie. "He needs medical attention. Surely, you have some spark of humanity in you."

She eased Bullen's draggled figure into a more comfortable position, and unwrapped the mass of blood-stained rags from his head.

"Get me a disinfectant, some hot water and proper bandages," she ordered.

Without a word, the German produced the articles she required. More, he stood at her elbow as she worked swiftly at Bullen's wound, and gave her such assistance as he could.

"You have done this before?" he asked almost timidly.

"I am a nurse," she answered. "Now," she added, as she rose from her knees, heedless of the pool of water that her soaked skirts had left on the floor, "Mr. Bullen should have these clothes removed. He should be put in a warm bed. Have I got to do it?"

"Not so, *Fräulein.*" The German spoke apologetically. "It shall be attended to."

He pushed a bell-button, and when a husky sailor responded, gave him certain directions. Two minutes later the sailor returned with a mate, and they lifted Bullen's body between them and carried him down the corridor toward the conning-tower.

"He shall have the cabin of my executive officer," said the German eagerly. "He shall be attended to. You are not to concern yourself, *Fräulein.*"

"That is a promise?"

"You have the word of a German officer," he replied stiffly.

All of a sudden Elsie began to feel very weak and cold herself. She sank down on the bench from which Bullen had been carried. The German's next words came to her from a great distance.

"The *Fräulein* is faint. Drink a little more of this."

Another gulp of the Schnapps brought her back to life. The German was bending over her, and the coldness had gone from his eyes.

"It seems, *Fräulein*, that you have forgotten yourself," he suggested. "Will you be pleased to retire to my cabin?"

He motioned to a door in the forward bulkhead of the saloon. Involuntarily, Elsie glanced down at her wet clothes.

"I am sorry," said the German swiftly, "but the equipment of his Imperial Majesty's vessels does not include ladies' garments. However, if the *Fräulein* will retire to my cabin, she may rest in comfort and I will have her clothing dried before the electric stove in the galley."

Almost unconsciously, Elsie's eyes leaped to his. The German threw open the door in the saloon bulkhead.

"There is a fastening on the inside," he remarked casually. "Observe, *Fräulein.* So it works."

Hesitatingly, she arose.

"You are very good," she acknowledged mechanically. "But——"

"Make free with whatever you need, *Fräulein.* You are my guest. If you require anything at any time ring the bell by the bunk three times, and I will come myself. I will give orders that you be not disturbed otherwise. You need rest—not so?"

She assented with a nod and a shiver. He held wide the door for her.

"Enter, *Fräulein,*" he urged.

"Thank you," she said, and walked by him.

The door clicked behind her. She was alone once more.

The room was bare like everything else on the submarine. There was a built-in bunk, a built-in bureau, surmounted by a mirror, a washstand, a desk, with a chair before it, some hooks. On the bureau stood two pictures, a white-haired, benignant old lady, with a lace cap, and an elderly *beau sabreur,* Kaiser mustaches twisted smartly, an Uhlan's helmet cocked over one ear. The old soldier's eyes were deep-set in his narrow face.

"His father and mother," thought Elsie, as she cast off her soppy clothes. "Why, they look like ordinary people, even if they are Germans."

A knock came on the door and she seized a blanket from the bunk and wrapped it about her, cowering in a corner.

"I am leaving some extra blankets by your door, *Fräulein,*" said the voice of the German officer. "When you are ready, place your garments out here and they will be removed to the galley. Do you wish anything?"

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"No," replied Elsie. "Thank you."

She heard footsteps retreating along the uneven, bolted floor of the saloon. Her eye returned to the picture of the old lady on the bureau, and she crossed over to examine it more minutely.

"Yes," she decided after a close scrutiny, "your son must be a gentleman. There's no doubt of that."

When she had removed her clothing and given herself a good rub with a large rough towel she made free of, she donned a heavy dressing-gown that hung by the foot of the bunk and opened the door into the saloon. The outer chamber was empty. Beyond it she could hear men passing and repassing over the echoing metal floors, the grinding purr of the motors, the swish of the waves.

She picked up the little pile of coarse, warm blankets, and in their place deposited her wet clothes, shut the door and jumped into the bunk. She was just going to sleep when she remembered that she had not locked the door.

III

ELSIE awoke with a start. Some one was pounding on her door.

"Yes?" she called sleepily.

"Dinner is ready, *Fräulein*—and your clothes are here."

Elsie sat up as if she had been pushed and stared into the surrounding darkness. She heard footsteps retreating in the distance. Where was she? What was this—and like a flash came memory of the tumultuous events that had preceded her sleep. She fumbled with one hand along the rail and found the electric-light switch. The barren room of the German officer seemed to leap at her out of the shadows, stark in its primitive simplicity. She swung herself over the edge of the bunk, and considered the tumultuous events that had landed her in such an incongruous—not to say unconventional—position.

What would the folks in Coshocton say if they knew of it? What would the matron of the Chicago hospital say of it? What would all the uncles and aunts and cousins say? But such reflections were futile. She had to deal with facts. Absently Elsie allowed her gaze to focus again on the photograph of the lace-capped old lady on the bureau. There was something unusually comforting about that picture. It was reminiscent of a certain aunt of Coshocton days, a dour, stiff-necked Methodist spinster.

"I dare say there couldn't be two people more different," Elsie reflected. "But I don't care. They do look alike. Aunt Jane always wore a cap."

Funny what confidence a lace cap will inspire! Elsie jumped off the edge of the bunk as lightheartedly as if she had been home in Coshocton, and started to walk to the door. At first, she balanced herself cautiously, as many days on shipboard had taught her to do, but she was surprised to find that there was almost no motion.

At the door she stood listening a moment. All was quiet outside. She opened it a crack. The tiny saloon was empty. On one of the couches lay her several garments—and wonder of wonders, they had been neatly pressed!

Elsie snatched them up and then stood a moment, attracted by a strangeness in the sounds that reached her. They were distinct, but curiously deadened. She sniffed. The air was pure, yet faintly tinged with the odor of oils and slightly humid. She saw that the sweat on the metal walls was even more pronounced than it had been the night before.

As she dressed quickly and washed at the little basin in the stateroom, her thoughts dwelt on Bullen. With something of a pang of reproach she realized that she had not taken pains to be sure of his proper treatment. That was a bad head he had had, she reflected with professional interest. If it had not been attended to. . . .

She remembered what the German officer had told her, and pressed the button by the bunk three times. His knock resounded before she had finished coiling her hair.

"One minute, please," she called.

This time she was successful in making three hair-pins do the work of six. She opened the door and the German rose at once from his seat at the end of the table.

"I think I do not need to ask if you slept well, *Fräulein*," he said, with a glint of very white teeth under his mustache. "We should have heard from you before this, otherwise. Not so?"

"What time is it?" she asked.

"It is six o'clock. You have almost, as the English say, slept the clock around."

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"And Mr. Bullen?" she demanded eagerly.

"He is much better. His head has stopped hurting him, and he will join us at dinner." The German hesitated. "That is, unless you prefer to dine alone, *Fräulein*."

"No," she answered. "I do not care—if only I may dine soon."

"At once," he replied with alacrity. And he went to the door in the bulkhead and shouted an order in German that reverberated against the metal walls. "We are running submerged," he went on, turning back to her. "I hope you have not found it unpleasant?"

"No, I was amazed at the lack of motion."

"Ah, ten fathoms down we do not feel the play of the waves. She is a good boat, *Fräulein*." He spoke with an air of conscious pride. "But I grow forgetful."

He sprang up and clicked his heels together.

"Permit me, *Fräulein*. My name is Wolf von Clauswitz. I command this submarine for his Imperial Majesty. I wish you to consider that myself and my vessel are entirely at your command, in so far as my duty permits."

Elsie acknowledged this rather pompous statement with some hidden amusement.

"Does that mean that you will set Mr. Bullen and me free at your first opportunity?" she asked.

"Certainly. I should have done so before this had you been fit to leave. The first vessel we sight, which I should be justified in sparing, I will put you aboard of."

"You are very kind," murmured Elsie. "But your attitude last night was—different, wasn't it?"

Von Clauswitz reddened.

"If it becomes known what I have done I shall be punished," he said simply. "We are ordered to have nothing to do with the enemy. But never before have I had a drowning man beside me, and when I saw you in the rays of the searchlight—" he checked abruptly. "You are not English?" he ended.

"I am an American."

"I thought so," he exclaimed. "I knew that only an American girl could talk to the commander of a German submarine like that. You made me think of—of—well, I could not do it. Before that it mattered nothing to me if one Englishman more was drowned."

A rasp came into his voice.

"I hate all the English, anyway. An accursed race! This man, Bullen, he is better than most; but even he—he has the damnable stiff-necked English confidence. You sink their boats under them, and they pretend it is nothing! They do not know when they are beaten. *Gott strafe England*, we say in the Fatherland, and surely the prayers of sixty-five million people must have effect."

"I suppose there are a few million English praying the other way," commented Elsie.

Von Clauswitz shot a quick look at her, but there was not a trace of humor in her face.

"Perhaps," he assented gruffly. "But I beg of you, *Fräulein*, let us not speak of the English. So long as Mr. Bullen is here we will feed him, tend his wound, and if it seems desirable, let him go when opportunity comes. But we wish to see and hear as little as possible of him and his nation."

He broke off as a steward entered and began to set the table.

"When do you come to the surface?" inquired Elsie.

"In a very short time now. As soon as it grows dusk. We have been dodging patrols and are returning to our beat."

"You have a regular field to cover?" she questioned with interest.

"Oh, yes. The English navy runs around after us and makes a great fuss, but we go on calmly about our business. And some day England will starve and suffocate under our pressure."

This time he spoke with the ring of arrogance that had marked his manner on the bridge the night before, and Elsie was tempted to remind him that it had been his suggestion to avoid the English and their ways. But wisely she determined to drop the subject altogether, and in this she was helped by the entry of several other officers, blond, bashful fellows, who muttered guttural greetings as they bowed low before her, and afterward looked at her sideways whilst their commander monopolized the conversation.

Last of all entered Bullen, escorted by an officer von Clauswitz presented as "my engineer, *Herr* Schumm," a slim man, with wistful eyes and a gentle manner. The Englishman looked white, but fairly fit, and his head was bandaged with a skill

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that satisfied Elsie's critical eye. He smiled at her, and said across the table:

"Some day I shall thank you properly for what you did last night, Miss Chambers. It was ripping. I can't see how a woman could have managed it. You must have towed me for half an hour."

"A most gallant feat and a wonderful piece of endurance," interpolated von Clauswitz, gravely courteous.

"Well, Mr. Bullen has forgotten to say that he lost his chance to get away from the *Greenland* by stopping to hack me out of a stateroom," returned Elsie.

"Ah!"

VON CLAUSWITZ spoke with polite interest, but at sight of a contraction in Bullen's brows, Elsie realized that the *Greenland's* loss was another topic to be excluded from that mixed company. She rallied all her resources, and gradually the conversation drifted into quiet channels, literature, art, educational standards, rural life in America, the technique of submarine operation, the chemistry of air. As they talked several stewards brought in the dishes of the simple meal.

"I am sorry," apologized von Clauswitz. "You will find our fare limited. We must live plainly under the sea."

But Elsie found the food satisfying. There was canned salmon, warmed up; canned peas, potatoes, hot coffee, an *apfel strudel*, smoking from the oven; and plenty of good bread with canned butter.

Most of the talking was done by Elsie and von Clauswitz. Bullen spoke when he was addressed; the German officers seemed too timid to do more than assent to general observations, and only the engineer, Schumm, spoke English at all fluently.

"You know Hoboken, *Fräulein*?" he said once.

"I have seen it from the New York shore," returned Elsie.

"Ah, they sell good beer there. It is the best city outside of Germany."

"*Herr* Schumm formerly was in the Hamburg-American Line service," observed von Clauswitz. "He is loyal to his old port, eh, Schumm?"

"It is a good country, America," answered Schumm, quietly. "There are not police at your elbow everywhere you go and few things are forbidden."

"I suspect you are a Socialist," said his commander, laughing. "You fellows will be the death of Germany if you are not converted."

"You are not a Socialist, then?" suggested Elsie.

"God forbid!" von Clauswitz spoke feelingly. "The key to Germany's strength today, Miss Chambers, is her steady refusal to accept the claptrap of the New World, which—with respect to *Herr* Schumm here—may be all very well in its way, but lacks the essential quality of iron discipline, without which mankind in the mass may not be advanced to greater power and prosperity.

"We Prussians, who have made Germany what she is by Bismarck's prescription of blood and iron—" his voice took on again that arrogant note which had grated previously on Elsie's ears—"we are not fooled by the nostrums of the professional politicians of other nations. We believe in the imperial responsibility to God; in the divine right, under the Kaiser, of the families of blood and breeding to steer the path of the mob; in the all-necessary military efficiency without which a great nation gone effete can be overturned by any band of well-armed savages. Look at Germany today. She vindicates that doctrine."

Elsie looked instead at *Herr* Schumm. He pushed away his half-eaten *strudel*, and a spot of color came into his colorless cheeks.

"Does the *Herr* Commander imply that one man is better than another man if he has a *von* before his name?" he demanded. "Surely, that is a theory that the professors exploded long since. Why, to go no farther afield, some of the ablest officers of our submarines are men of burgher—aye, the peasant—blood. And Mackensen! He is no noble!"

"Accident, accident, I grant you, my good Schumm," replied von Clauswitz impatiently. "But I spoke of politics, not military operations. I should be the last man to deny the courage which is the heritage of all Germans."

"The day is coming when the burgher and the peasant will have their say before the Kaiser, and that will be a good day for the empire," retorted Schumm.

"I trust I may not live to see it," said von Clauswitz coldly.

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He rose, and the other officers followed his example.

"I must ask you to excuse me, *Fräulein*. I must go to my duties."

Bullen looked up when the bulkhead door slammed after the last one.

"The swine!" he growled. "I beg your pardon, Miss Chambers, but I can't help it. And yet the fellow is an able man and a good officer!"

"He is a contradiction," Elsie admitted. "I think that he and all the Germans like him are suffering from some abnormal psychic lesion, some monstrous distortion of the soul. They are almost like men who are not responsible for their acts."

"He's a devil," rejoined Bullen. "He told me quite frankly that if it hadn't been for you he would have left me to drown."

"You mustn't show any resentment, Mr. Bullen," she pressed eagerly. "Remember, we are in their power, and it is only a question of a few hours."

"Oh, I'll try," he said. "No fear! I am as keen as you are to get free. But— "

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Have they really treated you well?"

"Surprisingly. That's your doing, though. You stirred up whatever spark of decency these chaps had left."

As Bullen spoke there was a gurgling sound under their feet, and the submarine tipped upward at a barely appreciable angle.

"Hullo," said Bullen. "They're emptying the ballast-tanks. We must be going to the surface."

They both sat very still for nearly a minute whilst the gurgling and hissing of compressed air resounded through the hull of the submarine. Then, as these noises died away, the U-boat came to an even keel again, and the Diesel engines, used for surface driving, commenced to hum. The door opened and Schumm entered.

"The commander wishes you to take this opportunity to breathe the fresh air on deck," he said. "We have come up in a heavy fog, and it is quite safe "

"Quite safe!" snorted Bullen in Elsie's ear as he followed her down the corridor toward the conning-tower.

"*Sssh*," was her only response.

Before they climbed the ladder to the deck Schumm produced two leather reefer-jackets which he made them put on.

"It is cold in the damp air," he observed. "You must not take a chill."

Indeed, they blessed his thoughtfulness when they gained the scant area of the deck beneath the tiny elevated bridge forward of the conning-tower. The submarine was enveloped in a pall of pearly vapor that clung like hoar-frost. They could scarcely make out the tops of the periscopes above them, supporting hastily-rigged wireless antennæ. The jack-staff at the bow was invisible. Von Clauswitz and the deck-watch were ghostly figures in the mist.

"It is better up here, not so?" the German commander greeted them. "Enjoy the pure air while you can, for I am afraid we shall not have a chance to set you free tonight."

"Why?" asked Elsie in alarm.

"A fog makes this good hunting for us, but we can not do any reconnoitering in it. We must strike and get away, lest our prey be armed."

Elsie put her hand on Bullen's arm as she sensed, rather than heard, the grinding of his teeth.

"But can you not simply go up to some vessel and tell them to heave to until we are aboard?"

"We hail no strange vessel we have not first inspected," returned von Clauswitz. "There are all kinds of submarine-catchers at sea, *Fräulein*, and the most harmless merchantman may show a six-inch gun through his cargo-port."

"You are making good speed," observed Bullen, speaking for the first time, as he glanced overside.

"Twelve knots," replied the German. "We have the whole Atlantic before us, and any bluff-sided merchantman will show before we are visible to him."

A quartermaster came up to report, and von Clauswitz drew away from his prisoners.

"LET us go forward a little," suggested Elsie. "I like to feel the wet wind blowing in my face."

They stepped out from the protection of the bridge and picked their way forward along the bolted deck, clinging to the hand-line that ran on either side of a narrow space to the gun-pit near the bow. The wind was freshening up a bit, and the submarine carried a fair-sized bone in her teeth. She sliced through the low-lying, ponderous

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rollers like a gaunt, gray sea-wolf, showering the deck with spumy spray. The footing was treacherous and the lookouts crouched low, hanging on to handline or deck-fixture.

Suddenly Elsie chuckled.

"What is funny?" asked Bullen.

"Nothing. That is—well, just me. You see, last night about this time I was leaning on the *Greenland's* rail, thrilling to my first touch of sea romance and praying for more. I got it, didn't I?"

"I should say you did," returned Bullen grimly. "With interest. It was—what's that?"

He strained forward, shielding his eyes with his hand from the spray.

"It's a ship," he cried. "My ——! Right on us. Don't they see?"

He turned to the bridge, bellowing at the top of his lungs:

"'Ware ship! Dead ahead!"

The nearest lookout, aroused by Bullen's roar, although he did not understand the words, stood up and saw the danger in the same moment. But before he had stammered his warning, von Clauswitz's sharp eyes had corroborated Bullen's. Bells jangled down below. The quartermaster spun the wheel.

"There may be time," muttered Bullen, as the bow began to swing off. "A-a-aahh!"

His fingers sank deep in Elsie's arm as a vast, flat bulk towered out of the fog on the port quarter, lurched hesitant and then drove down toward them. The lookouts babbled with terror and fled aft.

"They don't seem to see us at all," Elsie heard herself saying with mechanical quietness.

On the bridge behind them confusion reigned. Men shouted and scrambled. Von Clauswitz alone was calm. But the tumult was beyond his control. The men of the submarine sensed their doom, the doom they had meted out to so many hapless civilians. They fought to escape through the conning-tower hatch, and the hatchway was blocked by their struggles.

For a moment the terror held off. Then with capricious wilfulness, it climbed up a wave, brushed aside a barrier of mist and dropped square across the bows of the submarine, in a welter of flying ropes and timbers, with a crunch like the meeting jaws of a great sea-beast.

"Why, it is the derelict!" exclaimed Elsie, as she caught a glimpse of littered decks and jagged masts.

She felt the submarine sinking under her feet.

"Hold fast," Bullen shouted in her ear. "Don't lose me!"

She looked down and saw that he had joined her arms about his waist. Then she was conscious of a wave that rushed over them, of the screaming of men—and a wet darkness.

IV

"JUMP!" screamed Bullen.

Blindly she jumped. Ropes lashed her face; canvas bellied underfoot. She clutched at the ropes and kicked out for a hold on the folds of canvas. She had no idea where she was going or what she was doing, but beside her she could hear Bullen cursing and panting. Common sense told her she was fighting for her life, and like any cornered living thing, she fought hard.

Presently, it became apparent to her that there was a sizable spar under her chin, and she strove frantically to work herself up on to it. She forgot the tragedy she had just passed through. She forgot the splintered submarine. She forgot the cold water below her. Every nerve was centered on the task of gaining that spar. It meant an added measure of safety, and her chief interest was safety.

She pulled and tore and struggled and kicked. But she could not make it. Hampered by her skirts, by the masses of canvas on which she found precarious footing and by the height of the spar, she could not do more than clutch it with her two hands. Again and again she tried. The perspiration streamed down her face. The breath clicked in her throat.

She never thought of Bullen. She had relapsed to a primal outlook upon life, and she took it for granted that he was concerned with his own salvation. But she did not succumb to despair. Each time she failed to make it, she rested, and then put forth her strength again. She had worn herself out and her quivering muscles were almost at the point of surrendering, when strong arms reached down and gripped her shoulders.

"Steady!" came Bullen's voice.

She cast up startled eyes that vaguely saw him behind the mist. He was straddled

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across that precious spar she had failed to reach.

"I—can't—make—it," she gasped.

"You will," he said, and he looped a rope beneath her arms. "Rest in this."

He busied himself readjusting other ropes and exploring the folds of the canvas. Then he made a loop in another rope and lowered it toward her.

"Get your feet in this," he directed.

She obeyed him with some difficulty, her other foot slithering around on the uncertain foundation of slippery, yielding canvas.

"Now," he said cheerily. "Give me your hand. Up!"

With the purchase of that loop of rope for her left foot, and the help of Bullen's strong arms, she was able to throw her right leg over the spar. There she rested, holding to him spasmodically and breathing with convulsive effort.

"You're all right," he soothed her gently. "We'll be safe as can be in half a shake. Just you wait, Miss Chambers. Take your time."

It occurred to her dimly that it was rather remarkable for a man to be so cool and matter-of-fact in such a peculiar situation. But she was still too deeply concerned with her own agonies of mind and body to spare much thought to anybody else.

Bullen steadied her on the spar until he saw she was regaining her self-control. Then he began to hitch himself away from her into the misty gloom.

"Where——"

She reached out appealing arms to him in a gesture that almost cost her seat and scared her into her senses.

"You must follow after me," he said. "Come along. You can't fall. You still have that loop under your arms, remember.

She was encouraged by this to follow him cautiously to the end of her rope. Concentration of mind on the undertaking steadied her more than anything else could have done, and instead of calling for his help, she found herself, to her own surprise, calmly unfastening the rope and extending it. As she started to proceed, Bullen hailed her.

"Come on," he cried. "It's safe, after all."

When she reached him she saw that he was standing in a jagged opening in a black wall of timbers, through which the spar projected. He reached out his hand.

"Catch hold. That's it. Stand up. I won't let you slip. A long step, now! Here you are!"

In a trice she was standing beside him, and he was helping her cast off the rope that bound her waist.

"What is it?" she asked in amazement, for in the fog and darkness she could see nothing distinctly.

"The derelict," he told her. "This is the hole where she was hit—by a torpedo, I suspect. And her mainmast, that went by the board at the time, sticks through it. That mainmast was a Jacob's-ladder for us Miss Chambers."

Suddenly, as if a spell had been lifted, the tension in her head vanished. She became conscious of the lift of the ocean, of the clamor of waters, of a straining and creaking of timbers. Taking a firm grasp of Bullen's hand, she leaned out of the triangular opening in which they stood. Just a scant distance below black water lapped the derelict's hull. And to her ears that water seemed to be hissing a sibilant threat. She stepped back, shuddering.

"I want to get away from it," she whispered. "As far away as possible!"

"You shall," said Bullen kindly. "You mustn't feel nervous, Miss Chambers. We are quite safe for the time being. Follow me."

Still holding her hand, he led her up the breach in the derelict's side toward the level of the deck. As she climbed amid a waste of splintered, riven timbers, Elsie marveled that any craft could have sustained such a blow and be able to float. She asked Bullen, and he waved his hand at the confusion around them.

"She was packed with lumber, light, porous stuff," he said. "See how it's jammed into the hold. The water has swollen it, and with its natural buoyancy it tends to keep her up. A ship like this can't be sunk, you know. She has to be literally blown to pieces."

THE hole in the submarine was V-shaped, tapering inward, and it was easy for them to scramble out upon the deck. The mainmast up which they had fought their way, sprawled beside them, in a litter of lighter spars and tangled rigging. The deck-load of pine planks lay in stacks and shifted piles, like packs of cards half-shuffled. Sails and parts of sails billowed in the intervals of the wreckage.

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The foremast and mizzenmast had gone clean overboard, leaving a sizable gap in the bulwarks and a trail of splintered planks. In the clinging, pearly mist, this wreck of what had once been a good, stout ship looked desolate and forlorn.

"I feel as if it was dead—and we with it," said Elsie, with a shudder.

"Nonsense," rebuked Bullen, with his cheery laugh.

"It's like a ship of lost souls," she persisted.

"I say, you do make a chap uncomfortable," he remonstrated. "Buck up. We've got to make the best of things."

"I'm sorry," she apologized wearily. "Forgive me. After all you—Mr. Bullen, I can't go another step."

She sank down on a heap of planks.

"I'm so tired," she added. "I—I—must sleep."

He looked about him.

"I'm afraid it will be better down below," he said. "Anyway, I don't dare to go exploring in the dark. 'Fraid you'll have to—hold on, though. How's this?"

He pointed to a cavity in a stack of planks of the deck-load amply large enough to house her.

"And here's a blanket," he went on, dragging forward a torn piece of sail. "In with you, Miss Chambers."

She hesitated.

"But you?"

"Oh, I'll make out somewhere."

"No, you will not," she retorted, her sleepiness supplanted by alarm. "You mustn't go away from me. Oh, promise you won't go away from me, Mr. Bullen. I—I should die if I were left alone on this awful ship."

"I'll stay," he placated her. "But there's nothing to worry about."

"Thank you," she said gratefully.

But when she had crawled into her hole, a new and unreasoning terror beset Elsie.

"Mr. Bullen!" she cried. "Mr. Bullen! If it should storm and the planks should move! Or if the waves should wash over us!"

"I'll be here," he returned steadily.

"But—but I want you near," she answered desperately. "I—I want to be able to touch you. I want to know there is something living with me on this terrible ghost-ship."

Bullen managed to muster his old, cheery laugh once more—although it was growing weak from sheer weariness.

"I'll be right here," he repeated.

"Where I can touch you," she begged. "I'm afraid of the dark. Please!"

He sat down at the entrance of her little chamber and patted her foot.

"I'll sit here," he promised.

With a sigh of relief she drew herself together in a huddled knot and went to sleep. Bullen sat there, listening to her, gradually becoming aware of an overpowering weariness. He realized, too, that his head throbbed and felt sticky. He fought against the drowsiness that threatened him, snapping back his head each time it drooped forward on his chest.

Once he fancied he heard a noise forward on the fo'c's'le, and tried to stir his limbs; but they refused to obey him. Five minutes later his eyes were closed, and he fell over, without awaking, across the entrance of Elsie's chamber. The cold, the damp, the hard boards, all meant nothing to him. He slept the sleep of exhaustion, which follows ultimate taxation of the mental and physical resources, a coma rather than normal slumber.

V

THE sun, having burned away the fog, streamed over the low bulwarks of the derelict and penetrated the hole that sheltered the two wastrels. But its grateful warmth served only to intensify their slumber. Under its increasing power their damp clothing dried and their limbs relaxed as the heat reached tensed muscles. It was the middle of the forenoon when the light beating on his face caused Bullen to groan and turn over—and in doing so to strike his head against the corner of a plank.

He sat up with a stifled curse, blinking at the odd spectacle of the frowsy decks and his own salt-stained garments. Then he glanced at Elsie, and as if in response to some telepathic current, she yawned in company with him, murmured and sat up.

That is, she tried to sit up. Sitting up, in that confined space, meant bumping one's head. Elsie said, "Oh, dear!" and crawled out.

"Hope you feel better?" said Bullen, stretching himself luxuriously.

"I believe I do," she answered in some surprise.

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"It's lucky we have the sun," he nodded. "Well, I don't know about you, Miss Chambers——"

She gave him a shy look.

"Has it ever occurred to you, Mr.—ah—Bullen," she inquired, "that the last few hours of our lives may be said to represent years?"

"Why, yes."

He was puzzled.

"Well," she continued gravely, "people who have known each other for years are not likely to call each other Mr. or Miss—are they?"

Bullen's homely face grew handsome in a broad, cheery grin.

"Right-o," he assented. "But—but—well, Miss—I mean—that is—well, there's rather a difficulty—a facer, you might say."

"Yes?" she vouchsafed demurely.

His grin became a boyish chuckle.

"Fact is, you see," he admitted, "I don't know your other name."

"I was christened Elsa," she informed him. "But my friends call me Elsie."

"Elsie." He repeated it. "I like it. Well, Miss—that is, Elsie, let's make this occasion memorable by undertaking a hunt for food."

But she detained him as he started forward.

"You have forgotten something," she observed.

"Forgotten something?"

He stared blankly. She nodded. Bestirring himself, Bullen cast a troubled eye about the deck, slapped his pockets—and stared blankly once more.

"What is it?" he appealed.

"Why," she said reproachfully," aren't you going to play fair, Mr.—I mean—I don't know what I mean."

This time Bullen laughed outright.

"Will you have it all?" he demanded with a malicious twinkle in his eye.

"All," she returned uncompromisingly.

"Henry Arthur Burton Stowthwaite Bullen," he chanted. "Which will it be?"

"Are they all names?" she asked suspiciously. "Real names?"

"What do you think they might be?"

"Well, that long one sounded like a nickname."

"It's my sainted and revered maternal grandparents' name," he protested with some indignation. "They're great people down in Hants, I'm told."

"I'm sorry, then. But you're very trying. Now, tell me which one on the list you prefer, yourself."

"The fact is, I don't prefer any of them."

"You must have had sisters," observed Elsie with asperity. "No man could be such a tease without having received ample training."

"You may be sure I suffered," he said solemnly.

"How many?"

"Three."

"I hope you did suffer. Once more, and for the last time, have I got to stop and think and call Henry Arthur and the rest of it whenever I want you?"

"No, Elsie," he said meekly. "If you don't mind, call me Harry."

"All right—Harry."

She offered a slim, sinewy hand, and he gave it a sailor's grip. But she did not wince.

"Do you suppose," she remarked, as they started forward, " that there *is* any food on this ship?"

"That's a pleasant suggestion! Let's be cheerful. No use looking for trouble until it bumps into us."

"Yes, but——"

"I don't know any more than you about it," he interrupted, "but the surface indications are that this craft was abandoned hurriedly, not so very long ago. That should mean food aboard. The only danger is that water may have ruined it."

"Where is the best place to look?" she asked as they paused in an open space forward of the shattered butt of the mainmast."

"That deck-house, I should say." Bullen indicated a squat structure that had lost one corner in the collapse of the huge mast. "It looks as though it might have been a galley. Come on."

THE door of the structure hung open. A stovepipe, battered out of trim, projected crazily from the roof. On the storm side a state of imminent collapse prevailed.

"Not very promising," commented Bullen. "However, we'll see what we shall see. My hat!"

He stood riveted in the doorway.

"What is it?" cried Elsie.

"Tell me if I am seeing straight," he begged. "Is it—or isn't it?"

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He made room for her in the narrow entrance. By the sunlight that streamed through the gaping hole in the compartment she saw a sleeping figure stretched on the floor beside the little stove that filled one end of the place. The figure was Wolf von Clauswitz.

"How—" she started to ask.

"It can't be, you know," denied Bullen. "Really, it can't. The man must have drowned."

"But he's there!"

"If it's he, then the fellow has a familiar," retorted Bullen roundly. "He must traffic with the devil."

Elsie crossed the intervening space and bent over the figure. She nodded to Bullen, with her finger on her lips.

"He's alive," she whispered. "See."

She pointed, and Bullen saw the gentle rise and fall of the German's chest. Von Clauswitz lay on his back, arms flung wide, his coat open, revealing a heavy black belt that encircled his waist. His face was calm, but at intervals it twitched violently, and while they watched he muttered gutturally in his sleep.

"He must have had a worse time than we did," said Elsie pityingly.

"I hope he did." Bullen's manner showed no pity. "Well, I'd best wrap him up before he realizes his fate."

"No, no," Elsie protested. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing murderous. I merely propose to tie him so he can't do any harm."

"But what harm could he do?" she objected. "Mr. Bullen—Harry, I mean—let's be sensible."

"I am."

"No, you're not—and you're not kind. We are shipwrecked together; we must share a common fate. Why should we be suspicious and unkind to one just because he is an enemy? Surely, we have left the war behind us here. What can the war have to do with us now?"

"You don't know the German of the unmitigated Prussian breed," returned Bullen grimly. "And for one thing, I'm an Englishman. That man can never forget or forgive me such a crime. For another thing—well, he's a German. That's the top and the bottom of it."

Elsie smiled.

"Don't you think your judgment is a little bit warped?" she asked. "What harm can this man do us now? He is in the same boat with us. It is to his interest to work with us for our common safety."

Bullen shook his head.

"I don't follow your arguments," he persisted. "Excuse me, but you don't know what you are talking about."

"I know something about men," she said with a pleasant smile. "I'm a nurse when I'm home, you know."

"At the least, let me search him," Bullen pleaded.

But Elsie glided in front of him, as von Clauswitz, stirred by the steady drone of lowered voices, began to awaken.

"Leave it to me," were her last words to Bullen.

The Englishman shrugged his shoulders and leaned against the door-jamb.

"Have it your own way," he assented.

Von Clauswitz suffered himself to be aroused with all the reluctance of the schoolboy who intends to get the most he can out of sleep. He yawned, turned over, turned back, repeated the performance, and without warning opened his eyes full upon his visitors. He was the surprised party. His eyes dwelt first upon Elsie standing close by, then passed her and identified Bullen. His first expression of surprise changed to one of baffled amazement, and by degrees, to wonder and quick suspicion.

He leaped to his feet like a cat, crouching against the stove, and his right hand dragged a heavy automatic from a holster at his hip.

"Back, there," he snarled. "Back, I say! Both of you!"

Elsie reeled away from him in sick horror. She could not understand his attitude. Bullen put his hand on her shoulder and gently pressed her behind him.

"Keep your hair on, von Clauswitz," he said coldly. "Nobody has threatened you. Put up your gun."

"You stay where you are, Englishman." The German gave a sibilant hiss of hatred to the name. "By *Gott*, I will shoot you if you come at me!"

"It wouldn't get you anywhere, you fool."

Bullen's voice was casually contemptuous. Elsie decided it was time she mustered courage to intervene.

"Why should you suspect us of harming you, Captain von Clauswitz?" she asked. "If we had intended you harm we could

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have done anything we wished while you lay asleep."

The mask of rage lifted slowly from the German's face while she spoke. The rigidity went out of his attitude. He still trained his gun on Bullen, but his hostility visibly diminished.

"What do you wish, then?" he asked.

"Probably what you do—food," Elsie answered.

"So!" The last trace of suspicion left von Clauswitz's manner. "I am sorry if I frightened you, *Fräulein*, but—" he shuddered—"I was dreaming bad dreams."

He slid the pistol back into its holster, and sat down on the stove, nursing one knee, reflectively.

"SUCH bad dreams!" he repeated "*Gott*, I saw it all over again! Those foolish men in the hatchway—and Schumm, the fool, trying to check them and telling them to let the ones ahead out first. They are gone, all gone!" He swung about abruptly. "There are no others—no other survivors?"

"Not that we know of," answered Bullen.

"*Himmel.* What luck!" A gloomy look settled on von Clauswitz's face. "The most successful cruise I ever had, and a new boat, too!" He appealed to Bullen for professional sympathy, naively ingenuous. "Only think of it, Bullen," he reiterated, "a new boat! The *U-103* was my best command, and I have lost her. It will be a blow to my record."

"And all your poor men drowned, too," added Elsie.

"Well, they died for the Fatherland," replied von Clauswitz shortly. "Men could not die better."

"You escaped," she reminded him with a touch of indignation.

"That was fate—and because I was the best man of them all," he returned, mildly surprised at her heat. "The survival of the fittest, *Fräulein*—that is the law of the universe."

"I don't want to interrupt a debate on philosophy," interjected Bullen, "but this isn't getting us any nearer to food. Have you seen anything eatable, Clauswitz?"

The German eyed him angrily.

"Bullen," he said, "I desire that you remember that I have a *von* before my name, and to you I am also captain."

"If this lady were not here, I'd tell you exactly what I think of your tinsel pride," snapped Bullen. "As it is, I'll say simply that here you are one man and I am another. No, don't reach for your gun. I would not go to the mat over this, if I were you. It isn't necessary yet. Have you seen any food?"

"Let it be understood," said von Clauswitz, slowly, "that I am the commander of this party."

"We'll see about that later." Bullen took a step nearer. "Have you seen any food in here? Answer me!"

As the German drew his gun, Elsie stepped between them.

"I am a woman," she said, speaking to both impartially. "This position is a difficult one for me, at best. I ask you, gentlemen—as gentlemen—please to remember that."

Von Clauswitz replaced the pistol in the holster, and bowed low before her.

"I ask your pardon, *Fräulein*," he said. "I will try not to offend again."

"I'm sorry," was Bullen's brief statement.

There was a pause.

"I am very hungry," volunteered Elsie, making her voice as plaintive as possible.

The German dived for the corner opposite the stove.

"Let us see," he suggested. "This has the look of a cupboard. A-aah!"

He held up triumphantly a can.

"Beans!" cried Elsie. "Oh, how good! Boston baked beans! Why, this must be an American ship."

"Eh!" Von Clauswitz turned around toward her, a puzzled look in his eyes. "*Gott*, but you are right, though! Fool that I am! It is the lumberman."

"Did you torpedo her?"

"Yes, a few hours before I met the *Greenland*. She is the schooner *Harvey J. Turner*, from Savannah."

"Why on earth should you torpedo an American schooner loaded with lumber?" demanded Elsie, a ring of resentment in her voice.

"She was in the blockaded zone," replied von Clauswitz. "And timber is contraband of war these days. It makes ships, railroad ties, barracks, trench-walls."

"But she was—she is, American," repeated Elsie.

"America has been warned," declared von Clauswitz. "When the German Eagle threatens, she strikes."

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"In this case, she does not seem to have struck very effectively," observed Bullen dryly.

The German glared at him, and Elsie stepped into the breach again.

"I am sure we ought all to be glad of that," she said. "Even Captain von Clauswitz."

Von Clauswitz looked doubtful about this—perhaps it occurred to him that if there had been no derelict the *U-103* would not have sunk. But Elsie spoke so sweetly and cajolingly that he did not seek for a *double entendre.*

They found an ax, plenty of wood for chopping, and coal, and both the Englishman and the German, like all real sailormen, carried waterproof match-boxes. In no time they had a fire kindled in the galley-stove, and Bullen even climbed on the tottery roof and adjusted the battered stovepipe so that it would draw. While the men were so busied, Elsie dug up a can-opener, discovered a case of hard-tack, a canister of coffee, brown sugar and a water-cask. Twenty minutes later they were sitting down to their first meal, and all eating like gourmets provided with a Lucullan feast.

"Do you realize," said Elsie, when they sat back to breathe, "that we have eaten between us three cans of beans? We shall have to ration ourselves until we have taken a census of the food supply."

"For the time being the *Fräulein* will do nothing more," ordered von Clauswitz, as he arose. "It is due that you should rest. Bullen and I will do whatever else there is to be done."

He glanced about him hesitatingly.

"Captain von Clauswitz, have you ever cleaned up after a meal?" inquired Elsie.

"No," he admitted.

"Well, I fancy you would not enjoy the work. Suppose you and Mr. Bullen clear out and let me attend to this. The kitchen is woman's sphere, you know. Didn't your Kaiser once say something like that?"

It was plain that von Clauswitz loathed the idea of dish-cleaning, but he persisted in his desire to help until Bullen diverted him with the remark—

"I really think we ought to do something to get headway on this hooker. She's drifting at the wind's will, and the breeze has been freshening all morning. We might get out a sea-anchor."

Von Clauswitz jumped at this straw and went on deck with Bullen, discussing volubly the possible steps that could be taken to make them masters of their masterless craft.

"Oh, dear," said Elsie to herself, as she watched them go, heads close together. "I do hope they won't quarrel any more."

There was a faint, a very faint, feeling in the back of her brain that perhaps Bullen had been right, after all, and an irreconcilable German—especially one with a pistol—would be better off . . . But resolutely she dismissed the idea. They were shipmates together, she assured herself, comrades in misfortune, and once that fact had sunk in, all would be pleasant and friendly.

VI

ELSIE polished the tin dishes and pots and pans as well as she could and then took another look forward. The two men were laboring away at the wreckage of the mainmast, apparently without a thought for their past differences. Genuinely encouraged, she decided to embark upon an exploring tour, with the idea of making the food census she had suggested.

In the galley she tabulated a good-sized water-butt, quite full; a large assortment of canned foods, mostly beans and tomatoes, on shelves; a quantity of hardtack, a ten-pound canister of coffee, a half-barrel of brown sugar, rather soggy from moisture; and about half a barrel of very salty pork.

So far, so good. Having exhausted the resources of the galley, off which opened a tiny cabin, evidently the quarters of the schooner's cook, she investigated the mysteries of the open companion just forward of the unlashed wheel. Between the companion and the wheel was a grimy little skylight, covered by a barred grating. Elsie peeked down this, but without success. Then she poked her nose into the steep companion, sniffing at a dank, musty smell. It looked dark, but she took her courage in her hands and descended, a step at a time, peering cautiously about her.

The companion landed her in a narrow cabin that stretched aft to the schooner's stern. Light filtered scantily through the skylight. There were a table and three benches. Over the table a lantern swung

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from a hook. On one wall an instrument-rack hung empty. Two doors, dingy white, like all the rest of the woodwork, opened right and left. Underfoot, by the table, a trap-door showed in the floor. Elsie inclined her ear to listen for the swishing of water in the hold underneath. But all she could hear was the whispering of the waves alongside, and the undefinable creaking of the vessel's battered hull.

In her blouse she had a box of matches Bullen had given her, and with one of the precious vestas she lighted the lantern. Its rays, shed into every corner of the cramped compartment, showed nothing material that she had overlooked—not even the chronometer had been left—save a leather-bound book, like an office ledger, lying face down on one of the benches. It was the schooner's log, and at the open page Elsie read:

Aug. 15, Long. 15' 20" W. Lat. 50' 35". N. Made our northing this day and squared east. Light winds, some mist. Cargo steady.

So much was written firmly in a sprawling hand. But under the last line, in characters that trembled, as with fear, was the entry:

A submarine is——

That was all. For a moment, it seemed to Elsie, she glimpsed vividly the tragedy that had been enacted here where she stood. The schooner's captain painstakingly entering the dry routine of the voyage, the sudden shout from the deck, the whine and crash of a shell—and then the mad haste for the long-boat and safety. She had craved romance. Well, here it had come to her again. With a smile that was a trifle wan, she reflected that indeed romance and its twin, adventure, seemed now to be pursuing her.

She shut the log-book and put it back on the bench, unhooked the lantern and pondered where next to turn her steps. The inviting knob of the door in the left wall of the cabin tempted her and she threw it open. The stateroom was unbelievably small, its only means of illumination a dead-light which could not have been opened or washed for years.

A bunk filled more than half of it, bedding tumbled about as if an occupant had leaped out the minute before. On the wall hung a few cigaret pictures and colored lithographs from the Sunday papers. On a rimmed shelf lay a razor, a pack of greasy cards, a piece of soap and a comb.

Across the cabin the other door revealed an interior precisely similar, except that instead of cigaret pictures and lithographs of chorus girls and prize-fighters, the sole decoration was a moving representation of the Last Judgment, done with chiaro-scuro effects by a Sunday supplement artist whose instructions had been to "go the limit." On the rimmed shelf above the bunk, a huge, plush-bound copy of "The Family Bible, Subscription Edition, published by Hookem & Dunham, Binghamton, New York," shared space with personal knick-knacks.

Elsie smiled involuntarily at the contrast.

"The skipper must have had this room," she murmured to herself. "He was short and very broad and he had a beard. Wait a moment, though. Didn't he have a razor, too? No, he didn't. Yes, then, he must have had a beard—a gray beard. And he swore dreadfully and read a chapter from the Bible every morning. The other stateroom must have been the mate's. I think he was a tall, thin man, with watery eyes and a red nose, who talked with a whine and liked to gamble."

She left the doors of both staterooms open to air them out, hung the lantern on its hook and went on deck. The breeze was freshening steadily and the schooner had begun to roll slightly, with a marked dip at the bows that sent sheets of foam over the fo'c's'le. Bullen, with the ax, and von Clauswitz, with a saw, were sweating at the congested wreckage of the mainmast. They glanced up as Elsie drew near.

"I thought you were going to get out a sea-anchor—whatever that may be," she hailed them.

"We changed our minds," answered Bullen. "This breeze is blowing entirely too strong to be comfortable. We want to get rid of the mainmast before it blows any harder. It's too big to handle in one piece, so we are cutting it into three sections. You see, this big butt of wood might pound right through the deck."

"It is what you call a hard job," said the German, wiping a stream of perspiration from his face. "But this is a time for work—not words."

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"But how on earth are you going to lift such a weight of wood overboard?" asked Elsie.

"Donkey-engine," returned Bullen briefly, as he returned to his chopping. "Aft there by the stump of the mizzen. Know anything about gas engines, by the way?"

He paused again and looked at her.

"I've driven an automobile, if that is what you mean," she replied.

"Good! Wish you'd have a look at the thing, and see if you can get it ready for us."

Elsie found the donkey-engine a simple enough affair. The one problem was fuel, and she ransacked the schooner to uncover the storage place for the gasoline. At last, she found the barrels in a corner under the fo'c's'le hatchway, with a five-gallon container to carry the juice in. She had the motor ready and the driving and hoisting machinery oiled by the time the two men had finished their stint of hacking the mainmast apart.

IT WAS now late afternoon, and Elsie realized that they had a difficult task ahead of them. So she went to the galley, stirred up the fire and boiled enough coffee for a pint cup all 'round.

"But you have been shipwrecked before," insisted von Clauswitz, when she appeared with the steaming drink. "No. It is impossible, *Fräulein*. You know all the requirements of the situation."

"Just what we needed," applauded Bullen. "Next thing is to see about our tackle."

The stump of the mizzenmast was the highest one remaining. It rose at least fifteen feet above the deck. Bullen rapidly stapled a pulley as high up on the stump as he dared, and a second pulley to the bulwarks beside the gap crushed by the prostrate mainmast. Through these pulleys he rove a cable to the drum of the donkey-engine. Then the end of the rope was hitched to the outer section of the mainmast, which projected over the side of the schooner.

"Ready," he announced. "Do you think you can handle the engine, Elsie?"

"If you tell me what to do."

"Good girl! You stand by the lever and do what I tell you, exactly when I tell you."

He turned to the German, who was busy cutting away ropes and canvas that might hold back the stump they designed to throw overboard.

"That's right, Clauswitz. Will you stand by with me at the rail to guard against an accident?"

There was silence whilst Bullen tested the rope looped around the mast. Then he called—

"Start her, Elsie."

Chug-chug-chugger-chugger-chug-chug, went the engine, panting desperately. The rope hauled tight, tautened, strained—and slowly, very slowly, the end of the section that rested on the deck began to move overside, an inch at a time. When it had gone a foot, Bullen signaled Elsie to stop, and examined the log again to see if it was moving in the right direction. Satisfied with his inspection, he lengthened the loop somewhat, so that there would be room for the butt of the section to slip through it.

Once more he gave the word, and the donkey-engine puffed, Elsie's hand firm on the lever, her eyes glued on Bullen's face. Von Clauswitz, for the first time feeling a little out of it, stood apart, watching the others. He seemed to be thinking deeply, and he started with surprise, when, simultaneously with a loud cry from Bullen—"Stop, Elsie, stop!"—the projecting section of the mast up-ended overside, slid through the loop and plunged down into the sea, sending up a fountain of spray to wash the deck. Both Bullen and Elsie cheered, and presently von Clauswitz joined them rather shamefacedly.

"How clever of you, Harry," exclaimed Elsie. "That was beautifully done. Let's get at one of the other sections."

" 'Fraid it's a bit late," answered Bullen regretfully, with an eye on the purpling sky.

"Oh, we can make it," urged Elsie. "It won't hurt to try, anyway. And you said it would be safer."

"Ye-es, but——"

"Your pardon," interrupted von Clauswitz bruskly, as he strode forward. "I think there is ample time. Do you, Bullen, stand by to help me if I need you. *Fräulein*, be prepared, if you please."

He stooped to adjust the loop about the second section of the mast, which lay some distance from the side. Elsie looked at

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Bullen beseechingly, and he winked back at her.

"Can I do that for you, Clauswitz?" he inquired conversationally.

"It is not necessary," returned the German stiffly, yanking the loop into place with difficulty. "Now, *Fräulein*, start the engine, please—but gently."

ELSIE pressed the lever, and the mast began to crawl over the deck. Everything went finely until the section caught on a ring-bolt, when the loop slipped and lashed out at von Clauswitz's ankles. The German yelled with pain as the heavy rope struck him, and tumbled backward. Elsie stopped the engine at once, in time to prevent the released cable from winding around the drum, but both she and Bullen could not help laughing at the incident.

Von Clauswitz bounded to his feet, white with rage, teeth clicking.

"Laugh, will you?" he snarled. *"Donnerwetter.* I will show you."

He jerked out his pistol.

"Hands up or I fire!"

He pressed the muzzle into Bullen's stomach, and his eyes glowed like hot coals across the Englishman's shoulder at Elsie.

"Please! please!" was all she could think of to say.

She was terrified lest he shoot. She half expected him to shoot her, too.

"Swine of an Englishman!" hissed von Clauswitz. "Will you attempt to bully an officer of the imperial German navy? And then to laugh at him? You shall have a lesson. All night shall you be tied here at the mizzenmast to teach you respect for your betters."

"You are making an ass of yourself again, Clauswitz," said Bullen coolly. "Don't be foolish. You can't do anything to this vessel without my advice. You don't know anything about sail."

The German's lips curled back over his teeth.

"For that boast alone I am minded to send you to the English hell," he said softly. "But first you shall ask my pardon."

"Ask your grandmother!" retorted the Englishman. "Are you a schoolboy or a grown man? Do you realize that you are giving this exhibition before a woman?"

Von Clauswitz's answer was a vengeful jab with his pistol in Bullen's ribs.

"Does that feel pleasant?" he taunted. "You will not speak any more, unless I, your master, bid you. Is that understood?"

Bullen remained silent, fearing he might lose control of himself. But Elsie had reached the limit of her patience.

"Captain von Clauswitz," she said, as a mother might speak to an erring small son, "put up that pistol at once. At once, I said!"

He hesitated.

"There was a picture in your cabin on the submarine," she continued quietly. "Do you think she——"

"*Gott!*" sobbed von Clauswitz. "Why do you say that, *Fräulein?* Why do you say that?" He turned to her a face contorted to madness by conflicting passions. "All men go crazy in war! She——"

"What do you think she would say?" repeated Elsie.

He stared at her speechless for a moment. Then a quiver wrenched his tense body and the pistol sank by his side.

"I can not!" he gasped. "I can not!"

He fled away into the shadows of the deck.

Bullen breathed a deep sigh.

"Thank God!" he said. "Or, rather, without any irreverence, I might say, thank *you*, Elsie."

"No, oh, no," she denied. "Do not thank me. If he had shot you it would have been not he, but I, myself, who must have stood responsible for it."

"Nonsense," replied Bullen. "You are over-tired. You have had a constant nervous excitement for several days. You have not had sufficient rest. That is all."

"Ah, but you were right this morning, Harry," she insisted. "I should not have prevented you from disarming him. I can see that life will be like this so long as he has that pistol."

Bullen shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, well, he is a touchy young devil," he remarked, "but he can be handled. I can manage him generally. When I can't, you can. Don't worry about it now."

"But I can't help worrying. You would worry if you had made a dreadful mistake."

"I did make one," admitted Bullen cheerfully. "I was a dunce not to have gone ahead with the hauling out of that second section of the mainmast, without giving our Boche comrade a chance to

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stir up his Hunnish ire. Now, it is too dark and we'll have to wait until tomorrow. And the Lord only knows what tomorrow will bring in the way of weather."

"It's a good thing you can't do any more work," protested Elsie. "Come, let's get some supper and then turn in. I found staterooms below, with warm blankets. Think of it! I won't answer for their cleanliness, but they were warm."

"I say, this has been an education for you, hasn't it?" commented Bullen as they strolled aft toward the deck-house.

"It's good training for the hospitals," she agreed. "The best ever, in fact."

"Perhaps. Look here, will you excuse me half a second whilst I go and lash the wheel? We might as well be steering a straight course tonight."

Elsie lighted two lanterns she had found in the galley, and started to concoct a weird dish out of canned tomatoes, hard-tack, brown sugar and pork. She was in the midst of her preparations, when a humble voice from the doorway inquired:

"Would the *Fräulein* permit me to ask her pardon for forgetting myself?"

"Oh, you are forgiven," returned Elsie, with a lightness she did not feel. "But don't do it again."

"I will try not to."

He came in quite timidly, and she saw by the dim light the traces of tears in his eyes. Oh, the idiocy, the biological perversion, of the warped intellects that could take high-spirited men like this and misshape pride and character into a curious distortion of hysterical class patriotism!

VII

SUPPER was eaten in silence, save for a few observations from Elsie of a perfunctory sort. Bullen was grimly polite; von Clauswitz inclined to sullenness now that the first burst of repentance had worn itself out.

"There are only two bunks in the staterooms below," remarked Elsie casually, when they had finished.

"Oh, that's all right," said Bullen. "We'll——"

"Do not disturb yourself, *Fräulein*," interrupted the German. "For tonight I will sleep up here in the galley. It is well that one of us should be on deck in case any accident might befall."

"That's fair," approved Bullen. "Turn and turn about. I'll do it tomorrow night."

Von Clauswitz made no answer, other than a slight shrug of assent.

"Well, I don't know about you," said Elsie, smothering a yawn, "but I can hardly keep my head up."

"Right-o," assented Bullen. "I'm with you."

He followed Elsie to the door of the deck-house. Von Clauswitz remained seated.

"Don't you want to come for a look below?" she asked the German, pausing on the threshold. "You haven't seen it yet."

"Thank you. I will wait until tomorrow," he answered, frigidly courteous.

"Good night, then," she said.

"Good night, *Fräulein*."

She had an impression of gloomy eyes fixed upon her, as she went out into the darkness, eyes at once pleading and defiant, friendly and hostile. But she forgot the German's prickly personality in the keen zest of the wind that whistled the deck and pressed her close to Bullen beside her.

"Some weather," she laughed between gusts.

"My word, I don't half like it," he responded.

"Why?"

"Well, get off a ways and take a look at us. Here we are on a dismasted, battered derelict, with a hole I don't know how large in our side. The wind is working into the northeast, and that means we'll have it strong for several days. God knows what may happen to us in that time."

"It won't be our fault," she answered, suddenly solemn.

"No—not if I can help it," he said.

"There isn't anything else to do tonight?"

"Nothing I can think of. We'd best let her run before the wind. No use staying up at the wheel, either—unless it comes on a gale. The old hooker is fairly steady, and she ought to take care of herself."

The schooner was rolling considerably and shipping a deal of spray over her stumpy bowsprit. When they came to the companion, Elsie found the descent much more difficult than it had been during the afternoon, but the lantern she had lit still burned over the table and the air was sweeter.

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"Jolly quarters," commented Bullen, as he cast his eye around. "Which of these suites do you choose, Elsie?"

"If you don't mind," she replied, with a laugh, "I'll take the skipper's—this one."

"Right you are. But how in time do you know the skipper's little den so easily?"

"Oh, it must have been his. I made up my mind it was, and I refuse to be disappointed."

She indicated the Bible, and he chuckled.

"I won't question your judgment any farther. Anyway, I see a razor in my cabin, and that's worth more to me than an atmosphere of sanctity. By the way, I must find some things to take up to Clauswitz. Can't leave him to sleep on the bare floor, you know."

He stripped a blanket from the bunk allotted to himself, and then dived into lockers that had escaped Elsie's unskilful eye, drawing forth oil-skins, coats and divers other wraps, damp, aged and worn.

"He'll do with these and the fire you left in the stove," decided Bullen at last.

"Keep something for your own bunk," Elsie called after him.

But he did not answer. When he returned a minute later, she asked—

"Well, what did Captain von Clauswitz say?"

"Nothing," answered Bullen, with a twinkle. "At least, he said 'Thank you' in a way that made me feel his preference for my room rather than my company."

She hesitated.

"Harry," she said at last, "I know how exasperating the man is. I know how much you have suffered from him, how intolerable it must be. But—but won't you try to put up with him? It is as I have said before. Here we are, three of us, on this wrecked ship. We can't get off. We've got to live together and put up with each other. You are more of a man than he is. Won't you keep yourself in check and deny him the pleasure of making you lose your temper?"

"Hhhhmmm," said Bullen. "Seems to me I recall something about a young woman and a pistol and a vague idea of the higher morality of the shipwrecked Hun."

"You do," admitted Elsie uncomfortably. "And I don't blame you. I was wrong. I can't say any more."

"Wish we had that pistol now," said Bullen musingly.

"So do I. But we haven't. Will you help me and stretch your patience a little more?"

Bullen's face lit up in one of those occasional smiles that made its plainness handsome.

"Of course, I will. I say, Elsie, you've been top-hole all through this show. I'll back you up. We'll play cricket. What?"

He offered his hand and her strong fingers reciprocated his grip.

"Thank you," she acknowledged simply. "I'm awfully tired. Good night."

"Good night," he returned.

She had entered her cubby-hole when he called after her—

"Oh, Elsie—er—if I were you—that is—I think you had better not—er—remove your clothing."

"I shan't," she replied cheerfully. "And I think I'll leave the door open. Please wake me if anything happens. I'm afraid I'll sleep like the dead."

Indeed, she was asleep five minutes afterward, long before Bullen could shut his eyes upon the problems that insisted upon popping up again and again and arraying themselves in review; long before von Clauswitz's objective self-analysis and smarting pride succumbed to the healthful anodyne of bodily exhaustion.

SHE slept peacefully and deeply. The tossing of the derelict moved her from side to side of the bunk, but she was not conscious of it. She would have slept much longer, probably, if it had not been for Bullen's thundering knocks on the lintel of her door. But even before she understood what had roused her, she heard the howl of the wind and the thud of the waves breaking on the counter.

"What is it?" she cried, sitting up, with the sleep still in her eyes. "What is wrong?"

"Nothing wrong," came Bullen's voice reassuringly. "But there's a bit of a storm on, and I've got to help Clauswitz with the wheel. D'you suppose you could get us some coffee and hardtack? I've rigged life-lines from the companion to the galley."

She arose hastily, taking the precaution to don an oil-skin that hung behind the door. When she reached the foot of the companion ladder she was surprised to find a pool of water, and spray struck her face as she climbed. From the hatch her eyes

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beheld a raging tumult of billows, dashing onward beneath a sunless gray sky. The waves were breaking continuously over the schooner's bow, running in foamy green masses along the deck, only to spill out at the gaps in the bulwarks. She had never been so close to the surface of an angry sea, and the relentless pounding of the waves awed and frightened her.

But she grasped the life-line firmly, and started on the short journey to the deck-house, endeavoring to balance herself to the irregular motion of the derelict. She got along well enough until a particularly vicious sea bumped the schooner on the port bow and a crossing wave promptly slammed up under the starboard counter—whereupon the schooner tilted over violently and ended by scooting down a long, smooth-backed wave into a precipitous hollow of water. Elsie lost her balance completely, stumbled and fell. She was trying to regain her feet, when muscular arms lifted her and a voice exclaimed quietly:

"There is no danger, *Fräulein*, but you are not used to the excessive motion. Permit me."

Von Clauswitz held her by one arm, while with the other she clung to the life-line, and so she reached the galley.

"Has it been like this long?" she gasped.

"Since early morning. You have slept well—not so?"

He began to assist her in the preparations for the meal.

"Yes," assented Elsie, her hands instinctively tucking away stray tendrils of hair. "I slept beautifully. And you?"

"As the dead—as we sleep in the U-boats lying on the bottom of the sea."

His gloomy manner of the night before had vanished. He smiled as he stirred the fire in the galley stove and put coal on it.

"It's a good thing we had a night's sleep," remarked Elsie. "I'm thinking we won't get another very soon."

She drew up her sleeves and investigated the stove.

"Would you mind telling me how we are going to keep a kettle over the coals in this weather?" she added.

"A simple matter, *Fräulein*," returned von Clauswitz gayly. "Behold the advantage of having with you a man of mechanical experience."

He rummaged some cord from a drawer and swiftly rigged a complicated system of guy-ropes which held the kettle over the stove, despite the most desperate lunges of the derelict out of the horizontal.

"So," he said, with satisfaction, standing off to view his handiwork. "You may not fill it more than half, *Fräulein*, but at least we shall have a little coffee."

"I am lost in admiration," declared Elsie warmly. "You have saved the day, Captain von Clauswitz. I don't know what I should have done without you."

"*Chchckl*" he clicked his teeth oddly. "It is nothing. After all, we Germans have our uses."

"I'd be the last one to deny it," Elsie admitted. "Will you please get some hard-tack from that tin, while I make the coffee?"

Ten minutes later, refreshed and smiling, von Clauswitz went aft to relieve Bullen at the wheel. And for the first time Elsie saw him go without a sense of misgiving, without a feeling of agonized expectation. She turned back to her work, quite contented, careless of the clamor of the storm and the unruly motion of the derelict. She was humming softly to herself, when Bullen came in, dripping but undismayed.

"Well played," he applauded at sight of the steaming kettle, perched serene in all that turmoil. "How did you think of it?"

"I didn't. Captain von Clauswitz did."

"Ah! Our pirate chief seems to have slept off his temper."

"Yes. Don't get him worked up again."

"I?" protested Bullen virtuously. "Excuse me, but——"

"You know what I mean," retorted Elsie. "Keep off his feelings. Let him boss you a little, if he wants to."

She showed all her teeth in a sunny smile.

"You know," she went on, "there's nobody here but me to see him do it—and I know you are a better man than he is."

"Flattery!" replied Bullen, hugely pleased. "You are spoofing me."

"Not a bit. I want you to believe it isn't losing dignity——"

"Oh, I'll promise to be humble right enough. Matter of fact, there's so much to be done neither of us can have time to get mad."

"What are you going to do?"

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"Don't know yet. Haven't made up my mind. So many things, you see. There's that bally mast. We went and sawed it into three pieces yesterday, and now two of the sections are threatening to roll around and smash this deck-house. We'll have to attend to that. For another thing, we've got to do something to get steerage way on this hooker or keep her head up. Can't drift around—hullo!"

There was a crash outside.

"Dash it, the cursed mast is working loose," cried Bullen. "Just what I was afraid of."

He fought his way out of the galley, Elsie close behind him. The second section of the mainmast had jarred free from the tangle of wreckage that had held it in place and its bulk was being thrown with sledge-hammer force against the deck-planking.

Bullen sized up the situation at once.

"Got to chuck it overboard," he shouted to make himself heard above the whistling wind. "Can you give me a hand?"

She nodded, and followed his precarious progress toward the donkey-engine.

"I'd better tie you up," he announced when they reached their goal. "You might be washed away."

"Then tie a life-line to yourself," she commanded. "You will be in greater danger."

"I'm used to this sort of thing," he countered, as he lashed a length of rope around her waist and fastened the end to the stump of the mizzen.

He helped her unship the heavy cover of the engine, and watching his chance, lassoed the bouncing section of the main-mast with the looped cable they had used the previous day. Then the little donkey-engine bravely undertook its task, dragging the cable and the mast to the edge of the deck, where the hole in the low bulwarks gushed foaming green water.

When the section was suspended half overside, the engine was stopped, and Bullen waited until the schooner was riding the crest of a high wave.

"Full speed," he called to Elsie, and as the cylinders sputtered the spar rose steadily in air, slipped off the deck, swung an instant suspended above the boiling ocean—and dropped. It was carried past by a racing sea, and Bullen recrossed the deck to Elsie's side. The sweat beaded his face.

"That was cricket," he panted. "You played up nobly. Any bungling there, and that match-stick would have rammed through the deck. Can you help me with the last section?"

"Of course," answered Elsie. "I'm not doing anything. You are the whole party by yourself."

"Rot! Well, we'd best not waste time. Ready!"

Again he slipped the looped cable around the third section of the mainmast, and gave the signal to start the engine. But this time progress was much slower. The third section was heavier than either of the other two, more bulky and a longer distance from the side. Foot by foot, however, Elsie jerked it across the see-sawing deck, splintering planks as it traveled, to be sure, but nevertheless moving closer and closer to the rail.

THIS last fragment of the mainmast seemed to be endowed with almost sentient powers. It teetered and hesitated as if it knew the fate ahead of it. Now, it hung back deliberately. Now it slewed aside as if in petulant protest. Now it slung itself viciously at Bullen or some inanimate object, trying to cripple whatever was in its path. Bullen crouched constantly beside it, a long stick in his hand, watching for its caprices and vigilant to stave off its attacks as soon as they were started.

By the gap in the bulwarks he signaled Elsie to stop the engine, whilst he examined the loop and readjusted it.

"We must do this smartly now," he warned her. "This piece is so heavy that if it does not jerk clear——"

He shook his head.

"Really, Harry, you ought to tie a life-line around yourself," she remonstrated. "It is foolish to be reckless with this sea running and the holes in the rail."

"Don't worry about me," he answered lightly. "Let's show Clauswitz some seamanship. What?"

At Bullen's words, Elsie glanced aft where the German was handling the wheel, and she was rather surprised to observe the strained attention in von Clauswitz's face. He seemed to be as interested as Bullen and herself in the operation.

But the impression on her memory faded to dimness as she pulled the starting-lever

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of the donkey-engine in response to a sharp order from Bullen. Gradually the power increased, and the great bulk of timber stood up on end, swinging from side to side like some huge animal ferocious in its death-throes.

"Faster! Faster!" called Bullen. "All your power, now! Every pound!"

The engine chugged with hysterical insistence. The butt of the mainmast lifted off the deck, swung clear. They were just riding up the crest of a wave, and Bullen was prepared to let it swing outboard. But as the loop began to slip, the derelict yawed sideways to the wave, and the mainmast swung inboard like a pendulum.

Elsie's cry of horror stuck in her throat. The butt drove at Bullen, resistless as a sixteen-inch shell. But even as it seemed to be striking him, a wave rushed under the schooner's stern, lifting the waterlogged hull and disturbing the balance of the timber. It grazed Bullen, knocking him end over end across the deck, and swung outboard again, dropping into the water with a splash audible even in the midst of the storm.

In her first agony of suspense Elsie had eyes only for Bullen. Then, whilst the butt of the mainmast was still swinging, some subtle influence drew her attention aft. She was shocked and appalled to see von Clauswitz leaning over the wheel, a look of malignant satisfaction on his face.

"*Ooo-oo-oh,*" moaned Elsie, and she covered her eyes.

But as she did so she saw Bullen lying senseless in front of the gap in the bulwarks. Over his head a gray-green comber curled, topping the level of the deck by a tall man's height.

VIII

ELSIE leaped forward instinctively, without conscious thought, and when the tons of water crashed down upon her she had her arms locked firmly around Bullen's body. She was blinded and choked, buffeted and mauled. But her recent experiences had accustomed her to such flirtation with violence and death, and the life-line Bullen had fastened to her waist was a mortgage on fate. She forced her aching muscles to hold on, and when the wave receded, leaving her at the very edge of the gap in the scanty bulwarks, she found Bullen beside her, blood welling from the reopened shrapnel wound in his head and his wet face ghastly pale.

She struggled to her feet. Von Clauswitz shrieked something to her that she could not catch for the roar of the storm. But she was in no mood to heed the German, now. She tossed the dank hair out of her eyes, struggled to her feet and commenced the awful job of dragging Bullen's inert weight across the deck to the galley.

It took twenty minutes of back-breaking work, with intervals when she had to crouch down over the man's body to shield it as best she could from the waves that mounted the rail or the poop and swept forward in a cyclone of wind-driven spray, flying timbers and solid water.

She pulled Bullen across the threshold of the galley and as near the stove as she dared. There was hot water in the kettle, and with this she bathed his head, stanching the blood with fragments from her diminishing petticoat and undergarments. When she had bandaged him as satisfactorily as circumstances would permit, she poured a quantity of coffee into a cup and forced a thin trickle of it down his throat. The scalding liquid had its effect. Bullen sighed, moved weakly and opened his eyes.

"This — seems — to — be a — habit— of mine," he whispered, so low she could barely hear him.

"*Ssh,*" she admonished. "You must lie quiet."

He closed his eyes again, seeming to lose consciousness, and presently, moved by some irresistible desire to comfort, she lifted his head into her lap. For more than an hour she sat on the floor of the galley, wedged against the wall, giving to the roll and plunge of the derelict, sometimes wetted by streams of water that flowed in from the deck—and thinking, always thinking. All her thoughts ran in one channel.

Had von Clauswitz shifted the wheel so that the spar would be swung in against Bullen? In the beginning, she refused to credit this to herself. But at the end of an hour's reflection, with the vision of that look she had surprised on the German's face as he watched the mishap, she was persuaded that design, and not accident, had been responsible for Bullen's hurt.

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And anger, lava-like, impetuous, furiously consuming, swelled in her breast. She quivered with the shock of the elemental passions stirred up in her. Suddenly, she found herself calling the German by names she had not known her tongue to possess.

"What am I saying?" she asked herself in momentary dismay. "What am I saying?"

But the anger refused to be subdued. It rose fiercer and fiercer with each attempt at repression. At last she rolled up one of von Clauswitz's blankets, placed it gently under Bullen's head and rose to her feet, shaking all over.

"Oh, the Boche! The Hun! The cur! The unspeakable animal!"

The howling of the storm meant nothing to her—came to her, indeed, only as echoes of the tumult within herself. She walked out of the door of the deck-house, head high and the light of battle in her eyes. Heaving decks, rushing water, a wind that would not be denied—all these she did not realize. She walked aft like a person in a dream, her willowy figure swaying to the derelict's eccentric motions, her one aim the pulverization of the man who huddled against the wheel.

IN FRONT of von Clauswitz she took her stand.

"You contemptible coward," she said slowly.

"Wh-what does the *Fräulein* mean?" he stammered.

"I mean that you are not a man. You are a cur. You are the kind of thing no decent person wants to consort with."

"You have no right to speak to me this way," he answered with an attempt at injured dignity.

"You are mistaken. It is you who have no rights now. Oh, yes, you may have a pistol, but that means nothing to me. I am not afraid of you."

Von Clauswitz looked puzzled.

"But why do you say all this?" he protested. "This man, Bullen, is my enemy. His people and my people are enemies. We are at war. We exist but to slay each other. I would kill him. That is all."

Elsie stared at him curiously. Ordinarily she would have been frightened to stand there on deck alone, with nothing to support her but her own feet and her sense of balance. But she was so interested by this human problem that she never thought of the storm.

"I wonder how I can make you understand just how pitifully contemptible you are to me?" she inquired softly.

"You are pleased to be discourteous, *Fräulein?*"

By now von Clauswitz had recovered his self-possession.

"I repeat," he went on, "this is war, and in war all things are fair. What I did, Bullen would have done."

"That's not true." She was surprised at her own hot flame of anger. "Oh, how can you be so mean, so small? This is why your people are the outcasts of the world! This is why for generations in other lands the name of the German will be the name of the beast! Does your good name mean nothing to you, man? Do you desire to be hated?"

He gripped the spokes of the wheel a trifle harder.

"You are unreasonable, *Fräulein.* But that is the way of women. War is war. It is a business of killing."

"But among civilized nations it is fought according to rules. And in our case we are no longer in the war. We are outcasts, on another world, as it were. We are too near death, too defenseless before Nature's mighty forces, to nourish our trivial hates. Be a man, Captain von Clauswitz! Forget that you are a German. Be a man—and play the game fair!"

"Calm yourself, *Fräulein,*" he answered with a set smile. "You are unnerved. It is the strain. Please go below—but first tell Bullen to come and relieve me at the wheel."

An idea flashed into Elsie's mind as he spoke, and she smiled back at him—a tight-lipped, merciless smile.

"Captain von Clauswitz," she announced coldly, "I am going to teach you a lesson. Neither Mr. Bullen nor I will relieve you at the wheel today. You have it, and you shall keep it so long as you can stand on your feet and hold the spokes."

"That is childish, *Fräulein.* I have only to lash it, and anyway——"

She stooped quickly and snatched away from his feet the one piece of rope within reach.

"You can not lash it," she retorted. "It would be most dangerous if you did. You know as well as I that if you let go

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that wheel for a minute we shall fall into the trough, you will be washed overboard, and the derelict will be pounded to pieces."

A flush darkened the German's face.

"That means nothing to me," he cried. "I am not going to stay here to save an Englishman's life."

"Perhaps not," she returned significantly, "but you will to save your own. A man who is so anxious to kill another man by fair means or foul is generally very eager to save himself."

She turned and left him, picking her way easily amidst the wreckage, yielding to the lift and heave and thrust of the sodden old hull of the schooner. Von Clauswitz called after her, but she paid no attention to him. Nor did she look back at him as she entered the deck-house.

Bullen's voice greeted her.

"Hullo," he said feebly. "I say, what a bother I am! But I'm feeling better. Help me up, will you, please?"

She knelt beside him.

"Not yet," she denied. "You've got a nasty blow on your head, Harry. Come, be a good boy, and do what I tell you."

"Oh, if it's you tell me to!" He sank back, but at once tried to struggle up again. "What about the wheel, though? Clauswitz can't do everything by himself?"

"We'll make out safely," she reassured him. "Everything is all right."

"Yes, but it isn't fair to the Boche to put all the work on his shoulders."

Elsie realized when he knitted his brows as he said this that Bullen did not know that von Clauswitz deliberately had tried to kill him. She opened her mouth to tell him what had happened, and abruptly shut it again. Should she tell him? Well, why not? He had better know and be on his guard. But in the same breath, the thought occurred to her that to tell Bullen now would only agitate him, when he needed relaxation. She contented herself with saying rather sarcastically:

"Oh, our shipmate can stand up to the work. He must work his passage just like you and I."

"No favorites, Skipper, eh?" Bullen grinned. "You're sure I can't help you?"

She patted his shoulder for answer, and packed blankets and waterproofs around him to ease the motion of the deck. Then she busied herself concocting a broth out of hardtack and beans, a sorry mess, but warm and hearty. She forced Bullen to drink this, much against his will. Its immediate effect, however, was to send him to sleep again, and Elsie had opportunity to turn her attention elsewhere.

She went to the galley door. The storm was driving them southward with relentless vehemence. Relieved of the weight of the mainmast, the schooner rode the seas much lighter, and responded to her helm with some spontaneity. The absence of top-hamper was in their favor in such weather. When she looked aft, Elsie was almost inclined to be sorry for von Clauswitz.

Mountainous rollers chased the derelict, packs of sea-wolves, trying to poop it, towering almost over the stern as they galloped forward. Against these cliffs of water, the straining figure of von Clauswitz appeared helpless and forlorn. But instantly there recurred to her mind the crime he had attempted and the brazen way in which he had endeavored to pass it off. He must be taught that unreasoning hate had no place in their little cosmogony.

He called to her now, but she gave him a cool glance and returned to the galley. She found herself hoping that he would suffer, and she could not quite understand the unexpected depths of ferocity in her nature—she, who had fainted at her first sight of blood in the operating-theater, who could never bear to cause suffering to anybody, who had shrunk instinctively from the infliction of pain upon any creature all her life. She wondered vaguely if the great adventure of life, as she had known it in the last few days, could make one callous to suffering and pain in others.

"But I feel just as I used to about Harry," she told herself. "If he is hurt——"

She broke off, because something tingled inside of her. It felt pleasant, but delightfully queer. She decided to indulge no more in such speculations.

DURING the afternoon Bullen awoke much refreshed, and they had a good meal of coffee, hardtack and warmed-up beans.

"I'm feeling fit again," he declared, and proved it by sitting up.

"Your head doesn't seem quite right," objected Elsie, noting the pallor on his face and the way his teeth pinched his lip.

"Dizzy—yes," he assented. "Be all right in a minute."

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"Well, you are to stay where you are," she decided. "No, don't object. Do what I tell you."

"Very good, sir." He grinned his huge, boyish grin. "I haven't been bossed like this since I left the nursery. By Jove, it's topping!"

"Then show your appreciation by being a good case. Sit quiet there."

"But I say, how about Clauswitz? We've left him an unconscionable time, haven't we?"

"Oh, he'll do. Don't you worry about him."

"But I do worry about him. It's inhuman to ask any man to stand trick at the wheel alone in weather like this for more than four hours—stop, though, that beggar must have been there going on eight hours."

"It won't do him any harm," said Elsie. "I'm watching him."

Bullen eyed her curiously.

"You have a down on him, haven't you?" he demanded. "What's up? Did the fellow get randy?"

"No, nothing like that. But if you really want to know, Harry——"

She hesitated, on the verge of giving him the truth of the accident that morning. For a reason she could not fathom, she changed her mind at the last minute.

"Well?" he pressed.

"The fact is, I think his proud spirit needs a little taming," she finished up.

"Humph, you've adopted a rather strenuous course of training. 'Tisn't exactly humane, Elsie."

"He needs it. Take my word for it. He'll be a little more human when I get through with him."

Bullen whistled his amazement.

"I say, I'm glad you never got a down like that on me. Sorry for the poor chap. But you'll feed him, won't you?"

"Why?"

"Well, figure it out for yourself. How would you feel after about eight hours gripping the wheel-spokes?"

"Maybe a little coffee," conceded Elsie rebelliously.

"And some hardtack. Go on. Give the Boche something to use his teeth on. We don't want a dead man on our hands—no matter what his offense was."

"All right," she agreed.

She filled a tin-cup with coffee, put some hardtack in the pocket of the oilskin she wore, and essayed the dangerous passage aft to where the German stood by the wheel. It seemed to her that the motion was less violent than it had been, but because her mind was not so engrossed with other matters, she minded the pitching and tossing a great deal more.

She was genuinely shocked at the change that had come in von Clauswitz's face in the few hours since she had left him. His cheekbones stood out, and his eyes glared in deepened sockets. There were new lines about his mouth.

"Here is some coffee," she said. "You had better drink it at once."

With an effort, he untwisted the fingers of his right hand from the spokes of the wheel and reached out for the cup. She saw that they trembled with cramp, exposure and cold. Pity was born in her, but ruthlessly she forced it down.

"Thank you," he said hoarsely as he took the cup.

He drained the coffee in gulps, and when he handed it back to her his eyes pleaded for more. But she gave him the hardtack, and went back to the galley without another word. From the doorway she watched him munching on the dry stuff, both hands again holding down the kicking wheel.

"I'll bet Clauswitz was glad to see you," Bullen greeted her. "I say, have you noticed the change in the storm?"

"Change? No."

"The wind is shifting, and dying down. We've still got rough going ahead of us, but the worst is over."

"Thank God," said Elsie with a reverence she had never felt in church.

"I expect you're right," Bullen agreed. "Be rather strange, won't it, if we pull through?"

"Don't you think we will?" she asked amazedly.

He hesitated.

"Do you?" he countered.

"Why, yes—up to now."

"Bully for you, then. Don't let me discourage you. After all, the sea is a tricky lady. You never can read her intentions with any certainty. You know, I never could understand why the old Johnnies made the sea deity a god, instead of a goddess."

Elsie sat down cross-legged beside him on the galley floor.

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"I may be foolish," she admitted, "but I can't believe that after passing through so many perils we are going to——"

She paused, unwilling to use the dread word.

"I'm glad you feel that way," answered Bullen quietly. "It makes me hope a little more. You know, as what we might call an amateur of the sea, you haven't realized so well as we men how heavy were the odds against us. But I'm glad you've got your pluck with you. It's a great asset for us, as well as for you."

Elsie scrambled up and stoked the fire. Then sat down again beside him.

"Let's talk about something different," she suggested. "Tell me about England. Where did you live before you went to sea?"

They chatted on there by the comfortable warmth of the galley stove until dusk was falling. After Elsie had made Bullen comfortable for the night, she filled another cup of coffee, took some more hardtack and went aft to von Clauswitz. The German spied her in the gloom and uttered a throaty cry.

"Drink, *Fräulein*. For the sake of *Gott*—drink!"

When she extended the cup, he made to lift both hands off the wheel, but she stopped him with a gesture.

"You will get none of this if you do not obey me," she said. "Hold out one hand."

He consumed the coffee greedily, like a man whose blood has begun to chill under the constant lash of the northwest wind.

"Surely, you will send Bullen soon," he begged, as she handed him the hardtack.

"Mr. Bullen is still too weak to take the wheel," she answered coldly. "And I will not help you. It is your own fault that you suffer so. Your life is at stake as well as ours. You did a wicked thing when you tried to kill a man who had never injured you. If you wish to live, stay at that wheel."

Von Clauswitz straightened up with a certain dignity.

"Very well, *Fräulein*," he said. "I am a German. My will shall conquer—you and the storm. You can not break me."

Elsie left him with a curious feeling of respect.

"He said that better than anything I ever heard him say," she reflected.

She was not sorry to notice that the wind had decreased considerably as Bullen had predicted it would.

IX

WITH the first gray hint of the dawn light Elsie awoke. A mild breeze blew through the open door of the deck-house, and the derelict moved with ponderous deliberation, in startling contrast to its wild gait during the storm. Elsie was conscious of an agreeable sensation of familiarity with her surroundings. This dingy hole was already becoming home. Her cheek flushed slightly at the thought, and she glanced at the opposite corner, where Bullen lay, sleeping as quietly as a schoolboy, despite the bloodied bandages on his head.

The sight of Bullen reminded her of von Clauswitz, and she rose noiselessly to discover how the German had come through the night. She had an idea he might be close to exhaustion, but even so, she was not prepared for the terrible spectacle that met her eyes when she looked out of the galley door.

Von Clauswitz did not see her. He was crouched over the wheel in a shapeless heap, his hands clutching the spokes, his head hung low, his weight sagging as the rudder kicked or swung. Almost he looked dead to her, and she ran toward him, half-frightened and self-accusing. But he heard her footsteps on the deck, and by some tremendous effort of his will, straightened his back and stood erect, supporting himself by the grip of his tortured hands on the wheel. The eyes he raised to meet her were bleared and bloodshot, and they stared out of hollow caverns in a wind-raw face that showed pallid through matted beard and crusted salt.

He twisted this mask into an awful smile.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he croaked. "You thought I would not be here, did you not, *Fräulein?* Ha, ha, ha! You thought I would ask you for pity! You thought you could punish me, eh? Bend me to your will?"

Elsie shrank away from him. This was more than she had bargained for.

"Well, now you know better," von Clauswitz rasped on. "You can not break me so. I am myself—Wolf von Clauswitz, officer of his Imperial Majesty, wolf of the Prussian wolves! Suffer? Yes, gladly.

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Thirst? May my tongue wither before I whine. Starve, burn, freeze? All, without murmuring. Gladly, I say, gladly!"

He wavered over the wheel.

"The will to conquer!" he mumbled to himself. "That is it. The will to conquer! All the world before us, and God on our side. And you—" his voice became a snarl—"you, a woman, daughter of a mongrel race, you think that you can humble a warrior of the German tribes! Ha, ha, ha! Go tell your English swine how a son of Siegfried, a son of Barbarossa, stood to the torment! Ha, ha, ha!"

He pitched forward at her feet.

"Oh, how could I? How could I?" sobbed Elsie to herself, as she knelt beside him, all her former anger forgotten. "It was cruel! It is I who am a beast."

She started to turn him over, but the wheel, relieved of the restraining weight of his body, commenced to twirl at a rate that set the derelict to bobbing like a cork. She had carefully removed all ropes from the after-deck, and now it was necessary for her to run forward to the fo'c's'le for one, with which she made shift to lash the wheel. When this was accomplished, she renewed her efforts to restore von Clauswitz to consciousness, but he refused to respond. Next she tried to drag him toward the deck-house, but this was slow work, and in her nervousness she could not persist with it. Instead she ran back to the galley and woke Bullen.

"Can you stand, Harry?" she asked tensely. "Get up quick, please."

"What's up?" inquired Bullen sleepily. "I feel great, but——"

"There's no time to waste. You must hurry. It's Captain von Clauswitz."

"The Boche? What's he——"

Bullen found his feet, and stood, fairly steady, leaning against the wall of the deck-house.

"I think I've killed him," said Elsie, tragically. "Oh, I've been wicked, Harry, wicked! But please come quick!"

Bullen whistled low.

"There, there," he said. "Keep cool, Elsie. No use flying off the handle, old girl. Where is he?"

"Outside—by the wheel."

"I'll have a look at him. Mind giving me an arm?"

Very craftily he switched her mind to the job of helping him across the deck, and by the time they had reached the German's side, she had herself under control once more.

"Nothing much wrong with him I can see," declared Bullen, after feeling the man's heart. "A bit slow, perhaps, but—hold on, how did his face get like that? My word!"

"He was at the wheel all night," answered Elsie very low.

"All night?" Bullen swung around on her sharply. "How was that? It wasn't the thing to do, Elsie. It wasn't cricket. I could have helped out. I wasn't that far gone."

"You were in no condition for such work, Harry," she returned. "But I could have done it. I didn't because—well, because—because, Harry, I wanted to teach him a lesson."

"What for? You wouldn't tell me last night."

"It was something he did. Something——"

"What?"

Again Elsie was possessed by a reluctance to tell Bullen in so many words of the cowardly attempt on his life, although the memory of the incident, and of von Clauswitz's cavalier dismissal of it, rekindled her indignation.

"I'd rather not tell you, Harry," she said calmly.

"Was it something he did or said to you?" demanded Bullen with a scowl.

"No."

"I'll throw him overboard now, if it was," threatened the Englishman.

"It wasn't, on my word of honor."

"Humph!" Bullen looked suspicious. "Shall we throw him overboard anyhow?"

"No, oh, no. I think he's had enough of a lesson. Don't you?"

"Hope so. What shall we do with him?"

"I thought we might get him into the deck-house, where it is warm."

"Right-o. Dare say we can manage it."

And somehow, between them, they did. Fifteen minutes later, the German was disposed on a pile of coats and oilskins, wrapped in the blankets that had covered Bullen. He was breathing heavily and refused to heed efforts to arouse him so that he might eat.

"Best leave him alone," advised Bullen, after two attempts had met with failure. "I fancy he needs sleep most at present. Look here, look here, how about his gun?"

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"You mean——"

Bullen nodded.

"This is our chance to lift it. Might as well, you know."

SHE stood back, and Bullen knelt beside the prone figure, his hand searching under the blankets. But at the first touch of the Englishman's fingers, von Clauswitz was galvanized back to consciousness. He sat up, a gaunt, awesome specter, clutching the butt of his automatic.

"*Nein, nein, nein!*" he croaked fiercely.

Elsie intervened.

"Please!" she begged Bullen. "Don't let's have more trouble now." And as the Englishman hesitated, she added: "Leave him to me. He can't be in his right mind now. He's not responsible. If——"

"He's enough in his right mind to want to murder people," grumbled Bullen, frowning at the German's hot eyes that were fixed unwaveringly on his face. "Oh, well, Elsie—anything to keep the peace."

He went out, and Elsie spoke soothingly to von Clauswitz.

"It is all right," she said. "Nobody will take it from you. Lie down."

His eyes glared at her for a long moment. Then, with a formless grunt, he lay down, so that the pistol was under him and the fingers of one hand were wrapped about the butt. Almost at once he settled into a peaceful slumber. The worn look left his face, and there came to it, in repose, a curious expression of immaturity.

"Well, is the Boche all comfy?" asked Bullen, as she rejoined him.

Elsie blinked back a furtive tear.

"I'm sorry," she said, "but I can only stand about so much. Please don't make fun of me. And really, he might have shot you there. He could have done it easily."

"I dare say. Hope you don't feel you gave him more than he deserved?"

"N-no. Perhaps not. But——"

"If he deserved it, don't worry about it."

"But he must have suffered so awfully, Harry. It doesn't seem right to make any human being suffer like that for any cause."

"No?" Bullen spoke dryly. "I think I'd prefer suffering that way to starving to death in an open boat or drowning with a torpedoed ship."

"Yes, that's true. And I wouldn't mind if somebody else had done it to him—you or anybody. But I hate to think that I could be so cruel."

Bullen eyed her askance.

"Think you could take the wheel for a few minutes whilst I sit down here?" he inquired. "Thanks. I'll coach you."

He squatted on the deck beside her, and commenced a lesson in steering, interrupted by one visit to the galley to make sure von Clauswitz still slept. In her absorption in this new subject, Elsie was diverted from her troubles, and the morning drew on toward noon.

The sun beat down directly, and warmed them through and through. The wind died as the day waned, and at last Bullen decided that they might lash the wheel and leave the derelict to follow her own whimsical course. They devoted the afternoon to a more thorough exploration of the craft, and were rewarded by the discovery of an appreciable stock of unspoiled provisions in the lazarette under the cabin. Water had worked in here, of course, and the lower tiers of supplies were soaked, but they were assured of stores to last them many days.

In the evening they stole back to the deck-house. Von Clauswitz slept on in the corner, and not even the necessary noises they made in stoking the fire and cooking a meal seemed to disturb him. He roused only once to drink some broth that Elsie had prepared for him, glowering at them the while, never relaxing his jealous grip on that precious pistol. He lay down again as soon as he had finished, and went to sleep without a word.

"I envy him that nap," said Bullen, when they stood outside the deck-house, counting the stars in the dusky velvet dome of the sky.

"You are tired yourself, Harry," answered Elsie. "You will sleep just as well as he."

"Hope so. I wish I knew where we were."

"Haven't you any idea?"

"Not much—except that we have made a lot of southing. We're hundreds of miles from where we annexed this stew-pot."

"Well, we are alive and we have every reason for being thankful, haven't we?" asked Elsie cheerfully.

"Ye-es, but we're a jolly sight too far off

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the regular trade-routes to suit my taste. You know, in these war times, the ocean traffic is more constrained than ever to follow certain well-defined paths, where patrols are supposed to be maintained for their protection. Shipwrecked persons like us, who wander far afield from the regular ocean pathways, are not very likely to get picked up."

Elsie yawned.

"What does all that mean?" she demanded plaintively.

"I suppose it means, first of all, that we shall probably have to work out our own salvation."

"Well, we'll do it, if you show us how," she retorted. "And I know you will—just as soon as your head stops aching. And that reminds me, I think I'd better dress it again before you turn in, Harry."

"What a corker you are," he said gratefully. "I wonder how many girls could stand up to the test the way you do. You've saved my life twice now—oh, yes, you have. You've humbled our late Boche captor. You've done your bit whenever your turn was called."

"Nonsense," she protested softly.

"There's been no nonsense about it where you are concerned. I tell you, Elsie, a man wouldn't ask to have a better pal to guard his back than you."

"I'm glad you think so, Harry." In the starlight he could see the flush that dyed her face. "I—I wanted to help you, and not just drag along."

"It's I who have dragged along, Elsie," he returned feelingly. "You have played all over the field."

There was a short silence.

"And now about that dressing?" suggested Elsie demurely.

X

ELSIE found von Clauswitz poking faint-heartedly at the stove when she entered the deck-house next morning. He greeted her with a sardonic smile.

"You'd better give me that poker," she remarked.

He handed it to her with a low bow.

"I suppose you are hungry?" she went on.

"Very."

His noncommittal attitude inspired in Elsie an embarrassment that she resented. She jabbed the poker into the coals, and flashed at him:

"For what happened yesterday I am sorry. But I am glad I did it. I'd do it again."

"Very kind of you," he interrupted sarcastically.

"I mean it," she retorted. "Make no mistake about that, Captain von Clauswitz. But I have just this to say. I am going to give you one more chance. I have not told Mr. Bullen of your cowardly trick. If you behave yourself in the future I shall not tell him. If you——"

She broke off as Bullen appeared in the doorway.

"Be so good as to remember, *Fräulein*," snarled the German out of one corner of his mouth, "that I am master here, as between this Englishman and myself."

He spoke too low for Bullen to hear, but the Englishman sensed something wrong.

"Hullo," he cried. "I say, it's early in the day for disagreements. Breakfast before quarrels, please."

Elsie laughed as easily as she could, and von Clauswitz occupied himself with the coal shovel. No more was said, but Elsie had the satisfaction of noting that the German conducted himself as though her warning had made an impression. Several days later he remarked to her:

"I bear you no ill-will for what you did, *Fräulein*. A man must suffer for his mistakes, and — well, I did not think you had the will to fight me."

" 'Mistakes,' " repeated Elsie. "Surely, you did not mistake——"

"My mistake was in my failure," he explained simply. "The best plan is an error if it fails."

Elsie looked at him with horror.

"Have you no compunction at deliberately trying to murder a comrade in misfortune?" she demanded.

"Compunction? Why? And he is not a comrade, as you say. He is an enemy."

"Oh, you are hopeless!" She threw up her hands in despair. "I began to think you saw how despicable such an act——"

"I should prefer you do not use that word in reference to myself, *Fräulein*," he said with dignity. "My honor——"

"Bah, don't talk to me of honor!"

And she left him sorely puzzled.

For a week he was exemplary in conduct, but then he seized the opportunity, when

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Bullen was below, to suggest that Elsie ally herself with him.

"All Englishmen are swine," he declared. "They are a worn-out race. Now, you *Fräulein*, have the courage and determination of a German. Be on my side. Germany conquers."

"How childish of you!" fenced Elsie. "Why should I take your side, when it is the wrong side? Besides, I have gone out of my way not to take either side so far."

She honestly believed this, but von Clauswitz sneered.

"You treated me with consideration in the storm!" he returned. "Ah, yes! That story is too thin."

"If I took sides, why did I not tell Mr. Bullen what you did?" she demanded. "Why didn't I help him throw you overboard after you fell unconscious?"

"You are not fair," he insisted. "With Bullen you are on close terms. You call him by his Christian name. His blood calls to you."

"And yet you say I should be German!" derided Elsie, secretly aware of a feeling of discomfort at the trend of the conversation.

As an avenue of escape from it, she contrived to switch von Clauswitz to the subject of his interview with the Kaiser after his first successful submarine voyage, a topic upon which he delighted to expatiate and to which he was always ready to return upon the slightest excuse. He took a malicious delight in this and kindred subjects when Bullen was within hearing.

"Ah, yes," he said. "There were we all lined up before the dockyard barracks, and there came a flourish of trumpets at the gates—and the All-Highest walked among us, he and his staff, exactly like ordinary men, *Fräulein*. The admiral was beside him and they came up to me, as close as you are, I give my word. Then the admiral presented me, and I was about to bow, but *Majestat*—" in his excitement, von Clauswitz's voice became more and more guttural— "held forth his hand and gripped mine—such a grip as one man exchanges with another.

" 'Bow not, my friend,' said the war lord. 'A hero greets his kind and emperor as man to man.' "

Bullen, who had come up in time for the war lord's speech, could not avoid a chuckle.

" 'Man to man!' " he repeated joyfully. "That is what his Imperial Majesty was pleased to say," replied von Clauswitz, with a fierce stare. "Are you——"

"Oh, Mr. Bullen was impressed by the Kaiser's friendliness," Elsie hastened to intervene.

"So?" said the German, not entirely satisfied.

"Don't mind me, Clauswitz," begged Bullen. "Go ahead with your yarn. It's most—most interestin'."

"Humph!"

"Do go on," said Elsie, with an appealing glance at Bullen. "It was after that the Kaiser asked you about your——"

Bullen flushed.

"I say," he broke in, "I heard you boast once about your filthy exploits in murdering helpless men and women—yes, and children—but I'll be —— if I'll stand it again, Clauswitz. Leave that part out."

The German leaned forward with an evil light in his eyes.

"Don't go too far, Bullen," he threatened.

"Too far?" Bullen shrugged. "Man, I'm not afraid of you. Get that out of your system. Only, for reasons obvious to any gentleman, I don't want to have a fight with you here."

THE silence that followed was heavy as lead. It was ended when von Clauswitz turned to Elsie.

"I never told you of his Majesty's speech at the dinner in the navy mess afterward, I think," he said smoothly.

"No, oh no," answered Elsie eagerly. "Do tell it now."

She fell head-first into the trap in her anxiety for anything to relieve the situation.

"Old Tirpitz was there, and we drank to 'The Day'—" von Clauswitz cast a malignant eye at Bullen, who was busily braiding a rope's end— "I remember Tirpitz made us all laugh, the Kaiser, too, by saying there was just one thing the men of the high seas fleet were afraid of—that we of the submarines would leave none of the English navy for them to account for."

"Pretty cheap sentiment that, Clauswitz," said Bullen coolly. "Don't you think so yourself? Coming from a lot of Johnnies who won't leave their minefields to fight."

Von Clauswitz went on without heeding him.

"And after that the emperor rose, and we all cheered and he pledged us in bumpers

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of champagne and we drank back to him and to his house and to the brave German tribes that stood in human walls along the Western and Eastern fronts. Then he spoke to us of the English. He told us how always they had sought to undermine any nation that appeared to threaten them."

"Captain von Clauswitz!" warned Elsie.

But he did not notice her.

"He asked us to think of our heroes, of Bismarck and Moltke and old Kaiser Fritz and the Great Frederick, in the past, and of Hindenburg, and Mackensen and his own son, the Crown Prince, and Ruprecht of Bavaria, today. Then he compared these heroes of Germany with the men whom England worshipped. Marlborough, a man who served all sides, who betrayed every party he dealt with, bankrupt in honor and wealthy in shame. Nelson, a toyer with women, a degenerate; Wellington, who climbed to greatness with the aid of Prussian bayonets at Waterloo and refused to acknowledge the obligation. As for today, he said——"

Bullen threw away his rope's end and stood up.

"That's all you're going to say, Clauswitz," he stated quietly.

"Do not interrupt me," answered the German insolently. "And understand, Bullen, you are to do as I command you."

Elsie tried to slip between them.

"Please, please," she gasped. "Don't! Please don't! Captain von Clauswitz, I rely upon you——"

The German thrust her gently aside, and drew his pistol.

"Be so good as to stand clear, *Fräulein*," he said. "I am about to settle affairs once and for all with this English fool."

"Get out of the way, Elsie," snapped Bullen between gritted teeth. "He may hit you."

"But Harry!" she wailed.

"Don't worry. Stand off, I tell you."

Bullen sidestepped cautiously as he spoke. Von Clauswitz followed suit, his pistol poised at the hip.

"Why don't you drop your gun and fight like a man?" taunted Bullen.

The German's lips drew back in a tiger-grin over his teeth.

"You wish it, do you not——"

"Oh, I don't care," replied Bullen carelessly. "Only I should think you'd hate to have even an Englishman know you for a coward."

"That will do. Stand back or I fire."

Bullen edged nearer to his man, inch by inch.

"You are afraid, Clauswitz, aren't you?" he plagued the German. "You lost your nerve in the water. Never had any, eh? That's the trouble with you Germans. Been so used to killing women and kids, you don't know how to meet men any more. That it, eh?"

"Another word, and I shall shoot," rasped von Clauswitz, his eyes blazing with fury.

He raised the pistol, and as the muzzle lifted, Bullen dived low and hard in a rugby tackle straight for the German's knees. Von Clauswitz depressed the muzzle and pulled the trigger before it was too late; but the only response was a sharp click. The pistol flew from his hand as he went down on the deck, Bullen on top of him.

"Take that pistol!" panted Bullen to Elsie, his fingers reaching for von Clauswitz's collar.

The German heaved desperately in an effort to regain the weapon, but Bullen captured his free arm in the nick of time and they rolled over and over across the deck. Watching her chance, Elsie ran in, snatched up the pistol and stepped back out of the way. She stood against the wheel, the pistol clutched to her breast, her eyes fascinated by the primitive passions let loose before her.

A fight, traditions whispered to her, was a mean thing, something low, indecent, brutalizing. Her mind recalled police-court cases brought to the hospital in Chicago; the horror the details callously repeated by young 'bus surgeons, had raised in her. But this was unaccountably different. She was thrilled, absorbed, vitally interested, stirred to the depths of her being. She liked it! She wanted her man to win! That was what she told herself, as her heart beat fast or slow, according to whether Bullen was beneath or on top of the German.

The struggle ended when Bullen got a grip on the German's collar and jerked him to his feet. They stood, chest to chest, for a minute, both breathing hard. Bullen's head-bandage had worked free; his face was white, and his eyes smoldered like

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red-hot coals. But he was much the cooler of the two. Von Clauswitz was trembling with rage.

"Clauswitz," said Bullen very slowly, "I'm going to break you now. Miss Chambers tried her way the other day, and it didn't work. It was rather severe, at that. But it wasn't a patch on the treatment I'm going to give you."

He still held his grip on von Clauswitz's collar, and while he spoke the German attempted to wrench away.

"Oh, no, you don't," Bullen told him grimly. "Not until I'm ready for you, my bird."

He strengthened his hold, and said to Elsie, without removing his eyes from von Clauswitz's:

"This is going to be rather a nasty sight, Elsie. You had best go below."

"I—think—I'll—stay," she gasped.

"All right. Suit yourself. But remember, don't interrupt me."

He gave the German a slight shake.

"Now, I'm ready for you, Clauswitz," he said. "Must say, it's a personal pleasure—aaah, would you?"

The German jabbed hysterically at the Englishman's face, but Bullen was ready for him and warded the blow.

"So, you're inviting it, are you?" Bullen laughed mockingly. "Right-o! Here's one for the Kaiser! Man to man, you know, Clauswitz!"

He released his grip, pushed the German to arm's reach, and shot two cross-slashes to the jaw. Von Clauswitz, quite ignorant of boxing, staggered backward, his hands waving in air. Bullen followed him, raining jabs, cuts and straight-arm punches on his face. Driven frantic by his helplessness, von Clauswitz charged, flailing wildly, taking the blows that landed, striving madly to get at Bullen's eyes or wind-pipe. But the Englishman backed leisurely away from his rush, never letting up on the punishment, and finally stopped it by a drive at the stomach that stretched von Clauswitz on the deck.

BULLEN waited until he was able to stand. Then the one-sided battle began again. For the most part, Bullen fought in silence, with a quizzical, detached air. Now and then he rallied von Clauswitz, always with deadly effect, for the ridicule hurt the German more than the punches that had cut his face to ribbons and rendered him almost sightless.

"Wish the Kaiser could see you now, my Boche friend," remarked Bullen, when he was satisfied that enough effort had been expended on his enemy's face. "You're by way of being a work of art, if I do say it myself. No, I wouldn't rush if I were you! It's a law of dynamics that a punch is all the harder when it is met with momentum traveling in the other direction. Why didn't you ever learn to use your hands? Man to man, you know. That's what the Kaiser said."

By this time von Clauswitz was reeling under a succession of blows to the kidneys, heart and stomach. Elsie lost all her original berserk fury, sickened of the spectacle, and forgetting Bullen's injunction, raised her voice in a plea for mercy.

"Sorry, but I warned you," Bullen answered over his shoulder—the most perfunctory guard sufficed to fend the German's feeble blows. "You'd much better go below until this is over. It's not pretty—and it isn't going to be any prettier."

"But surely you've done enough to him," she pleaded. "He can scarcely stand."

"Yes, and after he has rested I'm going to give him some more. I'm going to break this Hun, Elsie. I'm going to make a human being out of him."

Bullen spoke in perfectly even tones, but there was a quality of inflexible determination in his voice that warranted his purpose.

Elsie turned away, unable longer to witness the crumbling to pieces of what had been a man, yet still unwilling to leave. She pitied the German now. Much as he had sinned, he was suffering an awful retribution in physical pain and mental humiliation. But she could not find fault with Bullen. She might protest, but she did not question the wisdom of his policy. His fight was her fight. Had he needed her, she would have stood at his side. She exulted in his prowess, even as she pitied his adversary.

Up and down the deck Bullen drove von Clauswitz. For a long time the German took his beating without whimpering, raising his battered face dauntlessly after each attack, striving to peer from his swollen eyes and locate his foe. Borne down, he would struggle to his feet again, Bullen standing by, scrupulous to allow

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him to regain his balance before resuming the terrible cannonade of punches.

But in half an hour von Clauswitz was whimpering as he attempted instinctively to fall into clinches to save himself as much of the torment as possible. In fifteen minutes more he was blubbering for mercy, trying to run away. At the end of an hour he collapsed.

Bullen stood over him, breathing a little faster than ordinary, a speculative look in his eye.

"May I bathe his face?" asked Elsie timidly.

The Englishman shook his head.

"I know you think me a beast, but honestly I'm right. This man has never known what it meant to own a physical master. He has nourished an exaggerated ego that—well, Elsie, you have seen what it is capable of doing. I am going to make a systematic job of this."

"It's—dreadful," she said with averted eyes.

"I know it," he answered gravely. "I feel rather rotten about it, only—as I said. I'm sure this is the right thing to do. I couldn't run any risk of leaving what he was alone here with you."

He raised his eyes candidly to hers, and she murmured assent.

"Can I get you anything, Harry?"

"No, thanks. I'll give the poor devil a short rest, and then——"

Elsie retired to the fo'c's'le and looked out to sea, her back resolutely squared toward the scene of the final humiliation of Wolf von Clauswitz. She heard the splash of the sea-water that Bullen threw over his victim. She heard the German's plaintive expostulations, appeals for mercy, sobbing, childish promises of good behavior, of perpetual slavery, of anything conceivable, if only Bullen would let up on that horrible punishment.

She shuddered as she listened, but it did not last long. A scant quarter of an hour, and the frantic blubbering, only half-sensible, was interrupted by Bullen's curt questions.

"Are you broken, Clauswitz?"

"Y-yes."

"Say 'Yes, sir.' "

"Y-y-yess, s-ss-ir."

"You've been a miserable coward, haven't you?"

"Y-yess, s-ss-sir."

And so on. An hypnotic iteration and reiteration of humiliating and debasing queries, abjectly answered, until Bullen said in a voice stinging with contempt:

"That's all, now. You may go into the deck-house and lie down."

When Bullen wearily walked forward at the conclusion of this last sickening episode, Elsie regarded him for the first time with aversion. But she was instantly surprised to see that he was shivering and that the sweat was dank on his face and forehead.

"God, wasn't it awful?" he muttered. "Elsie, I could never do it again!"

He sat down on a pile of lumber, his whole body trembling.

"Don't hold it against me, will you?" he asked. "I know I was right, but I couldn't do it again. I'll dream of that chap, I expect. I'll never——"

"Try to forget it, Harry," she urged.

Her aversion was changed to understanding.

"After all, you fought him fairly. He had the pistol. It was his advantage."

"Yes, yes, he had the pistol," agreed Bullen eagerly. "And he would have shot me, if he could. I don't understand how he failed. What became of it?"

"Here."

She handed him the weapon, a heavy Mauser automatic, fully loaded with a clip of unexploded cartridges. He tried to draw back the breach to inspect the firing-chamber, but it stuck. He pointed the muzzle overside, and pulled the trigger. It did not respond.

"Strange," he murmured.

He examined it more closely, and suddenly pointed to a streak of rust under the trigger.

"The water!" he exclaimed. "It has rusted so it will not work. And all this time he was bluffing us with a worthless pistol—and didn't know it, himself!"

Elsie experienced an intense and unreasoning desire to weep.

"I—I—just can't help it," she sobbed. "I'm so glad it's over. He—he might have shot you—and it was my fault!"

"But it wasn't your fault, 'cause he didn't shoot me," retorted Bullen cheerily. "And he couldn't have shot me, anyway."

"Well, please throw the horrible thing overboard. I shan't rest easy——"

"There."

Bullen tossed the pistol across the rail.

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Its blued steel flashed dully a moment in air, then sank out of sight with a crisp splash.

XI

BULLEN left von Clauswitz alone until the following morning—he would not permit even Elsie to attend to the German's wounds before then. But while she was starting breakfast in the galley he called von Clauswitz outside.

"See here," he began abruptly. "We might as well get things adjusted properly without delay, Clauswitz."

Von Clauswitz lifted his sullen eyes, half-veiled by swollen flesh, for a fleeting second. He offered no reply.

"I am going to be perfectly fair with you," the Englishman went on. "For what happened yesterday, you have yourself to blame. I won't say any more about it—except to remark that any further attempts at murder will be punished still more severely. However, that's done with. We begin again with a clean slate. Is that understood?"

The German nodded his head, without meeting Bullen's gaze.

"At the same time, I am in command," Bullen resumed. "I am going to be in command simply because I happen to know something about sail, and apparently you don't. If you did, I'd be willing to take your suggestions and orders. My first ambition is to see Miss Chambers restored to civilization. I take it you would like to reach safety yourself. I should."

Von Clauswitz nodded again.

"One more thing," said Bullen. "From now on we are going to work to get somewhere. We have drifted long enough. We must get sail on this craft, and try to head up for the Mediterranean traffic lanes. If we drift much farther south we'll fetch up in the doldrums or the Saragossa Sea. I expect your hearty cooperation."

Again von Clauswitz nodded. He stood, bowed and cringing, yet strangely unyielding. Bullen felt uncomfortable.

"Anything you want to say?" demanded the Englishman. "No? Well, let's have chow."

That breakfast must have been an ordeal for von Clauswitz. What there was left of the pride of the former haughty Prussian officer revolted against the idea of exposing his bruised face to a woman's eyes. But Elsie was tactful. She said nothing, except for a brief greeting, until after the meal was over. Then she sent Bullen out to take the wheel.

"Captain von Clauswitz will help me with the dishes," she added lightly.

Bullen appreciated her intention and went without demur, glad that she was plucky enough to tackle the difficult task of letting light into that tortured soul.

For several minutes she worked in silence, sizing up his condition. The man's nerves were temporarily shattered. He twitched; his breathing was jerky; he started at unexpected noises; he would not meet her glance. It was quite evident to her that his mental sufferings were greater than any physical pain caused by his beating.

"Sit down, Captain von Clauswitz," she said suddenly.

He obeyed her sullenly and mechanically.

"Does your head hurt?" she asked.

"Not much," he answered dully.

"I will make it easier," she offered. "Wait while I heat some sea-water. The salt will be good for the sore places."

For the first time he raised his eyes—and they were tragic.

"I thank you, *Fräulein*, but it can not be made easier."

"Oh, but it can," she returned. "Just wait and see."

She put a large pot of sea-water on the stove, and busied herself with collecting some clean cloths. Von Clauswitz leaned back against the side of the deck-house, and watched her, gloomily indifferent, apathetic.

"I am ready now," she announced.

"There is nothing you can do for me, *Fräulein*," he resisted stubbornly.

"Please," she persuaded. "It is my desire to help you, Captain von Clauswitz, but how can I do it, if you will not let me?"

"Why should you wish to do anything for me? Why should any one?"

"Because you are in pain—in trouble."

"Pain? Trouble?" He laughed wildly. "*Gott*, yes! But my honor! My pride! Gone—all gone! I that once bowed to no man! What have I come to? Why should I live?"

He shivered and moaned, but Elsie took his hand and stroked and patted it, crooning to him as a mother quiets a fretful baby. Presently, he gave in to her, and she brought

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the hot water and cloths and bathed his aching face. The salt stung his open cuts, but it healed, and he did not complain.

"Why do you do this for me?" he asked her when she had finished.

"Because I don't want you to suffer any more."

He frowned across at the stove, and his hands opened and shut, spasmodically.

"Suffer? But I tell you the hurts in my face do not make me suffer. That is pain. I can bear pain. No, it is here, inside of me." He struck his chest, and a note of hysteria sounded in his voice. "My pride —what was my pride, I mean! I have lost my honor, *Fräulein*. I am outcast. There is nothing for me to live for. I may as well go overboard—and forget."

"Is that the way for a sailor to talk?" she answered gently. "You will be ashamed of yourself for it some day, Captain von Clauswitz. Instead, why don't you face the facts honestly? You did wrong. You tried to murder a fellowman. You gave way to the hate that was in your heart. For that you have suffered. You have had a fearful punishment. But if in the end you justify yourself, if you prove yourself a man, what will it matter?"

"You mean—you could——"

"I could," she said firmly. "I am willing to respect you now as I never respected the man you were."

"*Gott!*"

He lifted to her a face strained with passion, lit by the fire of a new vision.

"You are what you prove yourself, Captain von Clauswitz," she reiterated.

His eyes that had glinted hard became suffused with moisture. Without warning he burst into a tumult of weeping, and flung himself prostrate on the floor.

Elsie felt her own eyes burning as she tiptoed from the dingy room. In those tears Wolf von Clauswitz was reborn. No miracle was wrought, to be sure. But a better and a more honorable man was delivered from the throes of that dark hour.

He did not like Bullen, and he never pretended that he did. His instilled hatred of the English and the memory of the awful pounding Bullen had given him were bars to any closer understanding than one based on mere toleration. But he was honest and straightforward about it. He played his part in the work that Bullen mapped out, and he never grumbled at his share. Elsie he waited upon with doglike devotion. She found it somewhat embarrassing, but the man was so impersonal in his attentions that she could not be annoyed.

SO TWO weeks more went by—much faster than the preceding days, for Bullen kept them constantly busy now. He had discovered a fairly substantial spar under the clutter of lumber on the port side of the deck, and this he got out and hauled into position by the foremast with the aid of the donkey-engine, riveting it to the stump with such bolts and clamps as he could dig out of the derelict's meager stores. Elsie's share of this project was the fashioning of a small sail out of some spare canvas.

Fair weather gave them ample opportunity to execute this undertaking, and when it was completed they had their reward in the greater seaworthiness of the derelict.

"In fact, I'm getting tired of calling her a derelict," asserted Bullen, as he felt her respond more readily to his touch on the wheel. "I'm going to patch up her side next, and then she'll be a real ship again."

But circumstances beyond human control intervened to spoil his plans of reconstruction. The *Harvey J. Turner* had all but played out her rôle in their lives. The pleasant, healthful days that had followed their first eventful fortnight on the derelict were ended.

One morning they awoke to find the sea leveled by a dead calm. The waves were stilled. The sun, slightly overcast, burned down with tropic intensity. Far off a haze danced on the water. Elsie blinked as her eyes took in the scene.

"It reminds me of 'The Ancient Mariner'," she said. "'As idle as a painted ship, upon a painted ocean.' Do you remember?"

"Yes," answered Bullen. "I say, I wish I knew where we were to a dot."

One of their great difficulties was the impossibility of accurately determining their position. By studying the stars, estimating the wind and keeping track of temperatures, Bullen and von Clauswitz between them could work out rough calculations, but they had no surety of correctness.

Satisfied that the wind had deserted them, Bullen piped all hands to his pet plan of

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stopping up the hole in the starboard side where the *U-103's* torpedo had struck. The schooner was almost as water-tight as an undamaged vessel, but plenty of lumber was available and Bullen had decided that they might as well make use of it.

They worked all the forenoon, Elsie as diligently as the two men. She had thriven on the rough, wholesome fare that was their portion, with plenty of exercise and sleep and salty air. She had pieced out her wardrobe with garments rudely remodeled from the simple wardrobes of the schooner's former officers, and she was a ruddy brown picture of virile womanhood.

Both the men enjoyed her. Bullen ordered her about in his kindly, big-brotherly way, and kept his true feelings out of his voice—although sometimes they shone in his eyes. Von Clauswitz seldom let her out of his sight, always anxious to serve, thoughtless of self. The German never forgot that she had restored his lost self-respect to him.

After knocking off briefly for lunch, they turned to again and worked until well into the afternoon, stimulated by a faint breeze that blew in puffy gusts. But the heat had exhausted all of them, and Bullen suggested that they quit early and rest before supper. Nobody protested. They stretched out on the deck, and luxuriated in idleness. Bullen was the first to stir. With a casual glance around, he dropped down the cabin hatchway.

"Goin' to have another go at those calculations," he explained.

Elsie murmured —

"All right."

Von Clauswitz, who never spoke to Bullen when he could help it, said nothing. In a short while Elsie dozed off, and von Clauswitz, propping his chin on his hand, had eyes only for her. In his preoccupation he never noticed the weird light that flickered in the west nor the dull line that crept up on the horizon astern and mounted higher and higher. Even the dank stillness that covered the ocean left him unmoved.

It was Elsie, who, in her sleep, vaguely felt that something was wrong, and awakened.

"What is it?" she asked, sitting up with an unexpectedness that dazed the German.

"What is what?" he replied.

"I—I don't quite know what. Something seemed to be happening—about to happen."

As she spoke the first sustained gust struck them, and she turned her eyes aft.

"Oh, look!" she exclaimed, awestruck by the majesty of the spectacle.

And, indeed, it was wonderful, an ink-black curtain that hung across the horizon behind them, tearing forward at a rate that covered miles every minute.

Von Clauswitz leaped to his feet, with a smothered curse on his own carelessness.

"Bullen!" he shouted.

The Englishman popped up the hatchway, cool as a jack-in-the-box.

"What's up?" he demanded.

Von Clauswitz pointed aft.

"We were asleep," he explained.

"My ——!" Bullen leaped to the wheel. "Quick," he ordered; "get that sail down, you two. No time to waste."

They ran to obey him. Already the schooner was feeling the momentum of that mighty wall of wind. She slid through the water like a frightened thing. Their fingers plucked at the refractory ropes, but the sail had not been handled since it was spread and in that time snarls had become fixed, coils tangled. They were still struggling with it when the gale caught the derelict. In the first rush of wind both Elsie and von Clauswitz were knocked down.

Looking aft, Elsie saw an ocean pounded flat under a curtain of darkness. She tried to raise herself to her knees, but it was as if an inexorable hand pressed down on the small of her back. She could not rise. For a moment she thought that that same inexorable hand was pressing the derelict down—down—down—into the water.

But with a howl the vanguard of the storm tore on. The sheer magnitude of it decreased, and Elsie was able to struggle to her feet, with some assistance from von Clauswitz. Both were aware of Bullen's figure, apparently very far away, clinging to the wheel and holding the vessel with the wind.

"We must help him," was the thought that flashed through Elsie's mind, and she touched the German on the arm.

It was impossible to make one's self heard in that uproar, so she made motions of cutting ropes. He understood and fumbled in his pockets for a knife. But he searched in vain, and Elsie was blistering

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her fingers on the ropes that held the wind-bellied sail, when the taut canvas split under the strain. This lessened the down-drag on the bow, but the sail still presented enough wind-surface to be troublesome. Finally, von Clauswitz succeeded in loosening a rope that let one-half the canvas soar off on the gale. The other half persisted in flapping against the primitive rigging they had raised to guy the jury-mast.

ELSIE was fighting to master this recalcitrant piece, when she heard a crack, clean-cut as an explosion, above the howl of the wind. In the same instant she was pushed violently forward and fell on her knees. Behind her there was a crash. She turned as she fell and saw the jury-mast collapsed across the spot where she had stood, trailing its ropes and rigging and torn canvas over the side. Under it lay Wolf von Clauswitz. He had seen it totter, as the flimsy fastenings gave to the wind-pressure, and instead of leaping to save himself, he had stopped to push her to safety.

Tears smarted in her eyes, but she did not give them time to fall. She sprang into the heap of wreckage and tore it right and left until the German's white face was revealed. The mast had fallen across his back, and he lay with his head twisted around on one side. His eyes had been closed, but he opened them as she reached him and words fluttered through his lips.

Elsie heaved desperately at the spar, but it was hopeless. Then she looked aft to where Bullen crouched over the wheel. Frantically she waved her hand, although in her heart she knew that it would be madness, sure invitation to destruction, for Bullen to leave the wheel in that tumult. He waved his hand back to her, and dimly she saw him shake his head. She glanced down at von Clauswitz. Unable to stir, yet the German contrived to convey negation of her idea.

Bitterly, then, Elsie owned defeat. But she made one more effort. She got her hands beneath the spar and lifted it a bare fraction of an inch—and let it down, with the knowledge that if she had raised it higher she must have dropped it with agonizing force upon von Clauswitz's poor body.

Desperation went out of her. She accepted the inevitable. She knelt down by him and put her ear close to his moving lips.

"No—use," the words came as from a vast distance, yet curiously distinct in the turmoil of the storm. "Spine—all smashed."

"Does it hurt?" she asked.

"No. All—right. Going—soon."

"No! Oh, no!" she cried wildly. "We will save you!"

"Dead—now—except—head," he answered, a ghastly smile on the white cheek upturned to her.

"Why did you do it?" she said.

That crooked smile again twisted the half of his face that she could see.

"Others first—self last. You—taught me. Glad."

He paused, then continued with an effort:

"Was—wrong. All—war—wrong. *Gott*—bless—you."

He seemed to muster his ebbing vitality for a last effort.

"Tell—*Mutter*."

She nodded, the tears blinding her eyes. He murmured something in German, but all she caught, the last word he spoke, was "*Mutter*."

XII

"A BATTERED old hooker, by Jove!" said the middy as he scaled the rail. "Where are you from?"

He looked with frank curiosity at Elsie's brown face and shining hair, displayed to great advantage by the rough pea-jacket and salt-stained watch-cap she wore.

"She is—or was—a Yankee schooner," answered Bullen. "The *Harvey J. Turner*, Savannah, with lumber for Cardiff. But we don't belong to her. We're from the *Greenland*."

"What? The *Greenland?*" The middy forgot to keep his voice pitched in the mannish bass he had prided himself on. "Why, she went down hundreds of miles north of this! How did you get here?"

"Drifted," said Bullen laconically.

"Only the two of you?"

"No. There was a German U-boat officer, commander of the submarine that sank the *Greenland*."

"My sainted winkie!" breathed the middy. "What became of him?"

"He was killed in the gale yesterday. We buried him this morning."

"Oh, Lor'!" The middy fairly danced.

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"What a yarn to tell the gun-room! Weeks on a derelict! But the Boche? How did Fritz get on board here with you?"

"We were on his sub when he collided with this derelict the night after the *Greenland* was sunk. He picked us up, you see."

"Best I ever heard," exclaimed the middy ecstatically. "Wait till I write my kid brother about this! He's some yarner for a bomber, but——"

The pause was expressive.

"I hope you don't think we are romancing," said Elsie, smiling. "It hasn't been funny, I can assure you."

"No, oh, no, ma'am, only——"

The boy hesitated.

"Well, most usually, you know," he went on, "you have to trim up a yarn a bit. But this—it tells itself straight off."

"Well, I'd have you remember I'm not telling it for your personal edification," said Bullen good-naturedly.

The bass note returned to the middy's voice.

"See here, my good man," he said. "You can't talk that way to the service, you——"

"Oh, rot! Unless they've reported me dead, I'm a lieutenant on the royal navy list—only reserve, to be sure, but still a few steps senior to you. So dry up like a good lad, and ferry us across to your skipper."

The middy flushed and saluted.

"Beg your pardon, sir. Some of these merchant sailors——"

"I'm a merchant sailor, as well as R. N. R. So that's a bad lay."

Elsie laughed outright.

"I'm afraid you'll find us crabbed until we feel really in touch with the world again," she said. "You can have no idea how far away one gets in an experience like this."

"Awfully sorry, ma'am." The middy saluted punctiliously. "Should have known better. But that's the chanciest yarn any boarding officer ever heard, I'll lay long odds. Your husband——"

Elsie blushed furiously.

"But he's not my husband, you see——"

"Oh!"

The middy stared blankly.

Bullen cleared his throat.

"Miss Chambers was one of the passengers of the *Greenland*. My name is Bullen. I was first officer. It's a long story, but we were picked up together by the submarine. We—we aren't married——"

He looked at Elsie, and her eyes met his, honestly, openly.

"Yet," he concluded.

"No, not yet," amended Elsie softly, and she slipped one hand under Bullen's arm.

A very serious look came into the middy's face, and his eyes blinked. He had recently recovered from his first love-affair. Recovered? Well, say, rather, that he was in the stages of advanced convalescence.

In order to cover up his confusion, he crossed to the rail and bellowed down to his boat's crew, with his best Nelsonian gruffness—

"Lay up here, two of you, with that time-bomb!"

"Are you going to blow up the *Turner?*" asked Elsie sorrowfully.

"Yes, ma'am. Menace to navigation—and all that."

"Too bad," said Bullen regretfully. "She's a good old tub. Gad, think of any iron hull, punctured by a torpedo, smashed down on the hull of a submarine, and still able to live in the North Atlantic!"

The middy opened his lips to say something, but seemed to think better of it, and hurried off to supervise the setting of the time-bomb. This attended to, he ushered Bullen and Elsie overside, followed them himself, and his crew gave way for the merchant cruiser that lay to half a mile distant, patiently awaiting their return.

Twice more the middy seemed about to speak, but each time he checked. They were coming up alongside the cruiser, as his third effort proved successful.

"Our padre isn't half a bad sort," he remarked disinterestedly.

Bullen reached over and gripped his hand.

"Neither are you," he said.

Elsie only smiled. But it was the first time the middy—or Bullen, for that matter—had seen a woman smile in that way.

Behind them there was a loud detonation. A column of water shot into the air where the derelict had been.

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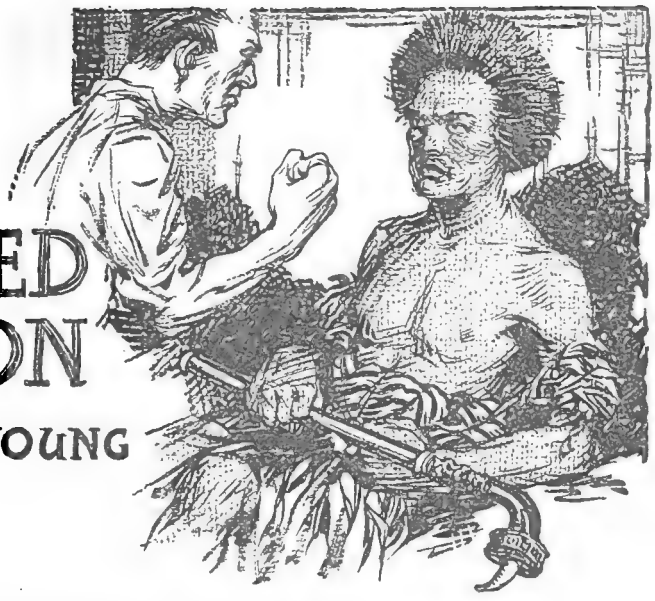
The UNLISTED LEGION

by GORDON YOUNG



Author of "Dangerous Men," "Gaboreau," etc.

NORTHWEST of the Fijis and marked faintly on maps that have the British Empire stamped in a reddish hue—no doubt symbolic of the living colors of the legion that has never been listed to which Britain owes the perpetual drum beat that greets the rising sun—are small islands perched on extinct volcanoes and mortised to their foundations by coral reefs. They were long thought to be worthless to planters and many were classified as uninhabited.

Missionaries experimented with this group, and a station was founded—and discarded—at Niko, though the stronghold of the native gods was at Ruroto.

When the Rev. Tobias Ollivant went out to Niko to reestablish the discarded church, his niece, Vestal Rankin, a blonde, pretty and devoted girl of about twenty, went with him. His long service among the gentle natives of the Samoan group had left him ignorant of most things Fijian or he might have been reluctant to bring the girl among a heathenish people, black themselves, whose ideal of beauty is white skin, blue eyes and yellow hair.

On an afternoon soon following their arrival while the Rev. Ollivant and his niece walked on the coral beach discussing the newly devised parables with which he hoped to impress even Vakambua, King of Ruroto—the large island faintly outlined against the horizon some sixty miles away—a dirty little schooner hove to around the palm-shaded tip of the bay and lowered away a boat.

Through her binoculars Vestal could see clearly enough to cry—

"Why, Uncle Toby, it's a white man!"

The boat rowed by four black boys made shore, stern on, not far from where the Rev. Ollivant stood.

The man was hatless, shirtless, barefoot, and in trousers hacked off at the knees. The sun had burned him until his skin appeared like scorched leather. His age was uncertain for his face had been seared by the lash of countless winds tipped with spindrift. Strapped to his thigh was a heavy revolver.

He looked dangerous; not so much because of his dress or lack of it, and the revolver, as because of his eyes. Vestal had once seen a lunatic; as nearly as she remembered the eyes were the same.

His introduction was:

"My name's Williams. Heard you were here. Thought I'd drop by and see if you were still uncooked."

Vestal thought his sense of humor shocking. Then she saw that he was looking directly and unsmilingly into the face of her astonished uncle.

But the Rev. Ollivant put out a hand

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and welcomed him with an effort to conceal the shock of the greeting, for he was determined, as became his calling, to be cordial.

Both he and Vestal had heard much about Williams, and none of it was reassuring. He was a trader, reported to be brutal and heedless; and was significantly known wherever white men spoke of him as "Hurricane" Williams. Fellow missionaries, depending too on hearsay, had cautioned her uncle to look out for him.

Vestal found it an effort not to flinch as he stared at her. He kept his eyes narrowed, almost shut as blue-eyed men do when much in the sun; but live coals seemed to be under the lids.

His movements were slow, deliberate as if consciously checked and restrained. He spoke jerkily.

"And how do *you* like these devils?" he demanded of her, sweeping his hand in the general direction of the sago-thatched village.

It was brutally insulting, of course. She felt that he intended it should be; and though very angry and a little afraid, too, she replied evasively.

She was indignant beyond words to see her uncle ignore the boorishness of the fellow, and was almost furious at the soothing manner in which he took Williams by the arm and invited him to supper with them.

Williams turned and shouted toward the boat. Two black boys picked rifles from under the canvas covering along the gunwale and jumped out, wading ashore.

"Tongans," he explained briefly. "Only white niggers below the line—or above it. My bodyguard. I'm pretty well hated."

She thought even worse of Williams at supper for the way he tried to frighten and discourage her uncle. But that was probably what he had come for. Vestal had heard about these traders.

Williams insisted that the natives of these islands were still cannibals: a statement that the Rev. Ollivant in horror denied, for had not Chief Kamsolu, ruler of the village, solemnly sworn that *bokolo* was a thing of the far past—never an instance of it being known after the good man Webb, the previous missionary of some six years before, had told the people that it was evil.

"I know—I know," Williams retorted impatiently. "And I know Kamsolu. Smooth liar. Be as bad as Vakambua if he had the courage. But let me tell you, Ollivant, the Fijian wild or tamed prefers 'long pig' to any dish that missionary imagination can invent for heaven's menu."

Vestal looked up in angry astonishment.

"Yes," Williams went on fiercely, "love 'em if you can't help it. But when you pray for 'em, ask the Lord to forgive you—and don't try to convert Vakambua. He ate the last missionery that did."

For a moment Vestal was in dread expectancy that he would be struck by lightning or something. Even the gentle Ollivant was momentarily without breath; and in a sort of daze followed the suggestion that Williams made.

"Banoo over there," he said, indicating one of the Tongans that sat on a mat by the fireplace scraping the last bite from an earthen bowl, "was a Christian till last week. Then he found a bottle of brandy. Better go over there and talk to him. He's lost his soul. It was my last bottle."

As soon as the missionary walked across the room and began to talk to the surprised Banoo, who was polite but no Christian, Vestal saw that Williams had wanted to speak to her alone.

"Your uncle's too set on laying up treasures in heaven to believe me. But you—here—" and he drew from the pocket of his trousers a small revolver—"take this and carry it. Here—" pulling a box from the other pocket—"are shells. I came to give these to you. I'll send Banoo ashore tomorrow and he'll teach you to shoot. Learn. Keep this thing on you every time you step out of that door. I'm not asking you to. I am telling you to. Will you?"

She was afraid of him. His eyes blazed fiercely and his muscles were contracted as though to spring at her. She promised. From the look of the man he might do anything.

"You'll probably keep that promise. You'll think God's watching to check up on you if you break it—even though you made it to a lunatic. Mary Webb thought I was crazy too—at times. Perhaps you never heard of Mary Webb. Not the truth anyway. She was the daughter of the last missionary here — the one that tried to convert Vakambua.

"Do you mean—" she gasped.

"No. I mean worse than that," he

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snarled, looking at her with a peculiarly fearful expression on his hard, wind-chiseled face.

II

THE next day natives swarmed over Williams' schooner, but were carefully and insolently herded into the roped space by the armed Tongans.

Williams, his back to the deck-house—on top of which two of the dozen alert Tongans stood guard—sat before the trade. Tobacco, mirrors, flashy brass trinkets, fish-hooks, knives and calico were piled before him. With grim patience he allowed the natives the full joy of haggling until their tongues were tired.

They knew him. They knew he was a most incomprehensible fellow who summarily flogged on the spot any native caught stealing.

Chief Kamsolu, withered and shrewd, came on board. He clubbed two quarreling subjects out of his way and was ceremoniously received by Williams who, after the usual elaborate powwow, made handsome gifts.

Then presently with ostentatious courtesy—Fijian etiquette would muddle the chamberlain of any court in Europe—Williams escorted Kamsolu into the cabin. As the door closed ceremony was shut out.

"What you think of the new missionary?" Williams asked pointedly.

Kamsolu squirmed verbally and vowed that the Rev. Ollivant was dear as a brother.

Williams raspingly suggested that that was an unfortunate comparison.

"They say your brother died from being unable to breathe after his throat was cut—and that's how Niko got a new chief. Now listen, Kamsolu. Missionary Webb was a good friend of mine; and he and his daughter had the bad luck over at Ruroto to be wrecked in a calm sea and on a reef that a total eclipse couldn't hide. Now how much do you think it would take to get you to hint to my friend Ollivant and the girl that it is not wise to visit Ruroto; and that Vakambua is most possessed of the devil when he worships the white man's God? How much, Kamsulo?"

The greedy eyes flickered in the worn, withered face of the old chief.

"Vakambua my friend—long time my friend."

"What has that to do with it?" Williams snapped.

"Why you not tell 'em?" Kamsolu asked shrewdly.

"I want you to. Now I have here a beautiful pistol. Scroll work of silver on a mother-of-pearl handle. I've had it a long time, and I've often thought what a handsome gift it would be for my friend Kamsolu. And here is a watch—the main spring's broken, but you can see yourself in the back, and if you jiggle it you can hear it rattle. And here is a bottle of gin. No Chinaman ever had a finger on it. The first British gunboat that saw me would plug my little schooner amidships if it knew I ever gave this to a Fijian chief, but between friends—what do you say, Kamsolu?"

The lean fingers of the old chief reached out and touched the square green bottle lovingly.

"I tell 'em Vakambua palienty big liar," he promised.

III

THE next morning Hurricane Williams sailed away; but Banoo remained behind.

In the usual manner of cruising about he was not due to return under four months. But in less than half that time one morning when dawn broke with a mighty noiseless burst as it does under the Southern Cross, Williams was standing aft and staring into the harbor where two massive double-canoe war-boats, their masts struck, were beached. With deck-houses for rudimentary heads and the canoes for bulky flappers, the war-boats seemed in the dawn like great, almost amphibian monsters that had tried to climb from sea to land, and having grown tired, rested and dozed while the gentle tide lapped their sides caressingly as though to lure them back to deep water.

"Just as I thought," Williams said to himself. "Vakambua's here. Kamsolu hasn't a double war-boat."

It had not been light more than a few minutes when a dark spot disengaged itself from the shore and moved slowly out through the harbor. Then Banoo climbed nimbly up a line that Williams tossed over the side.

Banoo was happy as a puppy that has found its master; and when he had said everything that he had to say two or three times, Williams went to the cabin.

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Out of a heavy sea-chest he took a small silver cross, and for a long time studied the engraved words on the back:

From the Foreign Missionary Society of the Manchester Highstreet Church to its beloved secretary, Mary Webb. The Lord watch over and shield you.

Between Williams' hard narrowed eyes moisture slowly gathered as he sat staring at and rereading the words faintly bitten into the metal of the little gift to Mary Webb when she went out with her father to carry the Gospel to the Fijians. Then he wrapped the cross in a clean bandanna and put it into his pocket.

Around noon he went ashore, rowed by his black boys. From the bustle and shouting and rising plumes of smoke he knew that a great feast was being prepared.

Children scampered about noisily, carrying firewood and green boughs and scurrying into the legs of their elders who were too noisily intent on their own joyful labors to scold and cuff. Fijians can no more work without noise than birds can fly without beating their wings.

Women were carrying cooking stones to the pits, for this was a feast of feasts; and in those pits where heaped wood had already burned out they were laying turtles, pigs, fowls, yams, coconuts and taros on the hot stones, and piling on pandanus and palm leaves to protect the food from dirt that was to be thrown back to hold the heat until the feast had been cooked. Men sauntered about talking loudly and doing little; and thick in the crowd were the many painted and oiled warriors from Ruroto.

Williams went through the village to the mission, but it was deserted. He looked about but could not see the Rev. Ollivant anywhere in the swarm of bushy-headed workers; but with Banoo's help he located Vestal.

"I want to speak to you," he said.

Her smiling face chilled at the sight of him.

"My uncle," she replied, "is here some place."

"He wouldn't listen. Have you kept your promise?"

Her hand went to the empty pocket of her skirt and she flushed guiltily.

"There is really no danger. It's absurd," she defended.

"So? Listen. Don't keep the promise your uncle has made for you and him to go home with Vakambua any better than you have kept the one to me. Didn't Kamsolu warn you that Vakambua was not to be trusted, and was most dangerous when he invited a missionary to go with him to Ruroto and preach to his villages? Didn't he?"

"No," she said in angry truth, "Chief Kamsolu assured my uncle that Vakambua is a noble chief who was converted by the other missionary——"

"Webb," Williams snapped.

"Who was here six years ago. And he has invited my uncle to go to Ruroto. And we are going."

"You are not!"

Williams' rasping voice came from between clenched teeth and again the insane light flashed from his eyes, and his body contracted as though he were about to hurl himself at her.

She drew back, really alarmed. Kamsolu had intimated many things to her uncle about this vagrant of the seas. He had been known to flog black men till breath barely flickered in their bodies. He ran whisky and gin in to the natives. He did not dare stir a foot from the water's edge without his guard of Tongans.

But ah! There had been a missionary before at Niko, and his beautiful daughter. She was a girl who had caught the glow of the sunset in her hair, and her skin was white as a polished whale's tooth; her eyes blue as the water of an atoll at dawn. And this wild trader had whispered evil things to her about the natives so that she had cried and wept when her father was proud and pleased by the conversion of the great king, Vakambua, and accepted his invitation to visit Ruroto.

Vestal's head was full of dark suspicions, and though afraid of him she was brave enough to say indignantly:

"I and my uncle know, Mr. Williams, why you want to make trouble between missionaries and the natives. It is not so easy to cheat them nor so safe to beat them when they are friends of the missionaries who may send word to the British commissioner and have you punished as you deserve to be!"

An oath cracked on his lips as he glared at her.

Vestal's cheeks flamed, and doubly assured that he was a brutal scoundrel, she turned abruptly from him.

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IV

VAKAMBUA, fresh from his hairdresser, with the mass of conical locks upstanding but evenly trimmed, reclined on the platform of honor in the house of his host and rested his neck on a cylindrical wooden pillow so as not to disturb the exquisite arrangement of his hair.

Williams stooped and entered through the low door. Vakambua was alone. All the household were outside busy with the feast that Kamsolu, out of great respect for his fastidious guest, was supervising. Williams also was alone.

Vakambua leaned on an elbow and greeted him tauntingly:

"Then it is a lie that you are dead! Many years and you not come to trade in my villages. Long time wait. Why you not come?"

"I'm lean and tough and would give the majestic stomach of my friend many pains," Williams replied grimly as he squatted before the king, indicating thereby that he had come to talk.

The Fijian is clever in the play of words, and no subtlety of tone or oblique intimation escapes his grasp. He is a braggart and a cannibal, but he has humor under his "'ayrick 'ead of 'air."

Vakambua grunted and grinned as he looked Williams over appraisingly.

"Look me over carefully, carefully. You may think it well to cook me tonight, now that you are about to be converted—*again*."

It was the sardonic emphasis of the last word and the gleam from the slits that served Williams for eyes that brought a scowl on Vakambua's face.

He quickly sat up, demanding—

"What you mean?"

"Just what you think I do," Williams retorted, his eyes widening while his clenched fists dropped to the mat on which he squatted.

Vakambua understood. For a moment his big body, glistening with fresh oil, was taut and his face angry.

Vakambua had killed men with his own hands while they kneeled before him, awed to shivering helplessness by the *tapu* that invests the chief and king; and the impulse was hot within him to kill this man. But though his war-club was at his side and his fingers twitched at the handle, Vakambua again felt the powerful magic that white men have in their eyes. Again it seemed to turn his blood to water.

No wonder, as he had heard, these men put their villages over all the earth, going up and down in their canoes big as islands and taking land wherever they wanted—no wonder, when they had such magic in their eyes that they could not be killed except from the back.

Vakambua's face relaxed as though he had just perceived what Williams meant. He was cunning as a Greek with words and knew the intricacies of duplicity.

"The white One God no good?" he asked encouragingly. "You no believe in him like missionaries? Want me your friend to no be made a fool?"

"Listen, Vakambua," Williams said. "Six years ago there was another missionary and girl here at Niko. You came, then as now, to visit Kamsolu; and there was feasting and much of it, for Vakambua is a terrible king whom Kamsolu fears to offend by a lack of hospitality. But Vakambua's stomach got less attention than the slender white girl who with her own hands brought him palm leaves heaped with roasted pork.

"She sought to please Vakambua because her father prayed for his soul—for when a chief is converted all his subjects rush to get into the same heaven. And right here at Niko Vakambua drove away the witch-doctors that argued against it and became a Christian; then straightway asked the missionary and his daughter to go back with him to Ruroto and burn the *bures*.

"The missionary and his daughter were put on one of the two big war-boats that Vakambua had with him—then as now—and strangely enough, Vakambua sailed not with them but on the other boat.

"They were never seen at Niko again. The canoe was found wrecked where never a canoe had been wrecked, or could be wrecked in a stormless sea. But the wreck was there. I came a long way to see it—remember? Their bodies were never found—so Vakambua said."

"I wept till my eyes ached," Vakambua put in, appearing very sorrowful.

"Two years later here at Niko a fellow came to me for tobacco. He had no copra, no turtle 'heads,' no yams, no eggs, not even a pig which he might as easily

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as not have stolen. No. But he had this—" and Williams took the bandanna from his pocket and removed the little silver cross.

Vakambua shifted his feet uneasily, though he stared at the cross as if he had never seen such a thing before and was not much interested anyway.

"He was ready enough to talk. But I triced him up by his thumbs to a yard-arm and burned matches under his toes till he was ready to tell the truth. I wanted to know—since Mary Webb was drowned and her body never found—how he came to have the cross that she always wore around her neck.

"That war-boat of yours was not wrecked until the girl and her father had been taken off. And that same night there was a great feast to Ndengei, your cannibal god, but Vakambua had five wives instead of four."

Vakambua arose haughtily and started to walk out of the house.

"When liars talk, you believe," he cried.

But what more he might have said was cut short in his throat, for Williams had leaped as though catapulted from the ground and Vakambua was hurled back by hands laid violently on his inviolate person.

"No," Williams roared, "you don't get out of here till I am through. Then I go first. I want to be on hand when you tell your warriors to sneak up and club my boys. But I have more to say to you—much more.

"That fellow who had stolen this cross from you said that the girl was dead. He didn't need to tell me that. She knew her God well enough to be sure that He would forgive her for taking any door that led from your hut.

"I took that fellow clear down to Suva, but the British commissioner was new on the job and after looking through the files said that the records showed that Missionary Webb and his daughter had been drowned; and as Ruroto was listed as an uninhabited island, I must be mistaken and the fellow a liar."

Vakambua stood by the dais sullen and pretending not to listen. His heart boiled within him. His sacred person had been fouled with violent hands; and like a shark at his vitals was the knowledge that he was afraid to strike and wipe out the insult.

"Now Vakambua, you plotted deep—but I am going deeper. Ever since I knew that another fool missionary and a white girl were here at Niko, I have been going from place to place telling planters what rich islands Niko and Ruroto are—small, but finest in the South Seas for colonists. Some time in the next few weeks the first-comers will be here on a ship they've chartered.

"They are hard men, Vakambua. And they are coming, not because I said the land was rich, but because I told them no white man had ever stirred the ground. You don't understand the Saxon urge to go into the far places where none have gone before—to fight soil and heathens, sun, wind and fever, and build homes on the frontiers.

"But they are coming, and Niko and Ruroto will no longer be listed as uninhabited. And when they get to Ruroto it will be safe for missionaries to be wrecked. They'll ruin my trade, for other traders will come and packets will make their harbors—but they'll crowd you and your —— cannibals into the ocean—and you, Vakambua, are the pig-born whelp I'm after!"

To say he is born of a pig is the deepest insult that the tongue can carry to a Fijian. The words stung worse than had Williams' hard hands, and Vakambua snatched at the war-club. But he did not strike. He did not even lift it. Williams' leveled revolver seemed to have leaped from holster to fingers.

"Drop it," he growled at Vakambua, whose fingers were tight at the carved club's handle. "I don't want to kill you. I could 've done that long ago. I want you to live till the children of white men shove you out of their way as they chase each other in the village street—till fat tourists with glassy eyes come and gaze disappointedly at the dirty little hut housing the old native king—till you whine around bar shanties with outstretched paw for a pinch of tobacco—till you maunder the prayers and songs that missionaries teach along with their gifts of canned milk, which will be what you are after. Then, Vakambua, you will know why I did not kill you long before this.

"You will come to it—oh yes you will, Vakambua. I have seen kings and chiefs, proud in their day as you are, scratching

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their scabby bodies in front of bar shanties and waiting to pick up discarded cuds of tobacco.

"And now, Vakambua, go back to Ruroto any time you are ready—but go alone. Otherwise, you wait till that ship comes in with the colonists. What do you say?"

Vakambua answered with wrathful dignity:

"I come. I go. No man say when or how."

"I'll be —— if you do!" Williams snapped in a voice that made the words crackle.

Then he backed himself out of the low doorway.

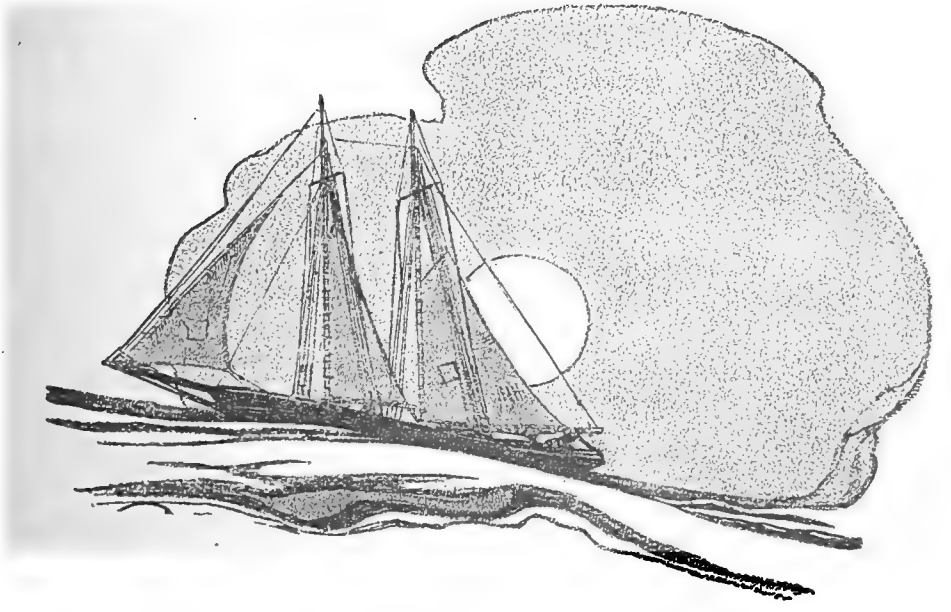
V

THAT night while the village howled at its feast and eventually stuffed itself into a stupor, two points of fire suddenly raised themselves out of the darkness in the harbor. They grew and grew until the flames were eating away at all that was above low tide on the two great war-boats that had come from Ruroto. Then in the glare that rose over the water a small boat with four men at the oars and one in the stern might be seen slowly pulling away toward the side-lights that gleamed far out where the dirty little schooner lay.

That is about all there is to tell. Vakambua and Kamsolu talked of attacking the schooner, but they had good reason to be afraid of the Tongans and the devil-eating white man. Vakambua debated about making the trip home in small open canoes, but he didn't, and so stayed on until the colonists' ship came in. Then he got passage when it sailed on over with the restless planters bound for his island.

Some of the planters were angry that Williams had fired the boats of the native king with whom they naturally wished to be friendly; but he explained nothing, and having stood guard until the colonists came, sailed away with his black boys to find what other islands there might be with no white men on them.

It was just as well perhaps that he changed his trading course, for the Rev. Ollivant sent back on the colonists' steamer a long and bitter letter for the British commissioner in which was reviewed in detail the effort of that notorious trader, Hurricane Williams, to make trouble between the missionaries and the natives.



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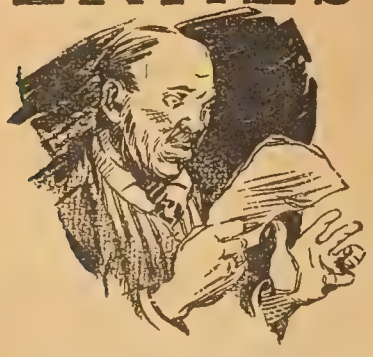
TENNESSEE JOE



by HAPSBURG LIEBE

Author of "The Cross at Purgatory Fork," "The Man Who Whipped a City," etc.

HE WAS fourteen, a newsboy, and lived under a little-used New Orleans wharf when he lived at home. But it was more like a lair than a home. It was roofed and walled and floored with knocked-down pine boxes, and a pine box served as both table and cupboard; his bed was a bed of packing-straw. During the hot Summer nights his lair was cool, and in cold Winter nights it was fairly warm; though he did have to sleep under a blanket in the rawest weather.

And it was inviolate. Few of his fellows even knew where it was, and that few knew better than to intrude or to tell. You see, this lone and lonesome "Tennessee Joe" had a rather far-reaching reputation for being able to take care of himself. There was a little French in him, a little Acadian, on his mother's side; his father had been a stalwart, fighting Tennessee mountaineer with a wandering disposition. Joe himself hailed from the logging-country of Louisiana's pine belt, where his father had met and married his mother.

To sneak to his den was a thing that the boy never failed to do. It appealed to his rather romantic make-up. As usual, he closed the door on its leathern hinges to shut out the mosquitoes, piled down on his straw bed, and proceeded to eat his supper while he counted his paper earnings of the day.

"Twenty cents for somethin' to eat," he muttered, "makes forty-four cents. Which ain't so bad."

The twenty-four cents he hid in a big-mouthed pickle-bottle, under the pine-box floor, after the doing of which he finished his meager evening meal. Then he made sure that the small, screened windows had no holes through which mosquitoes might effect an entrance, stretched himself out on his bed and went to sleep before dusk fell.

But he wasn't to sleep very much that night. Just after darkness closed in, the sound of a revolver-shot came from somewhere toward the river, and it brought him to a sitting posture. One of his hands went toward the door and swung it open silently. A little later he heard the splashing of oars. Joe sat there and stared toward the Mississippi's few blinking lights for five more long minutes; then he heard a masculine voice speaking in a low tone.

"I reckon I must ha' got him. I sure did hate to do it, but he simply wouldn't stop."

"Yes, you got him," came a deep bass reply. "I tell you, I saw him go down."

"Coppers," frowned the lad.

He disliked all "coppers"—that is, policemen—for they had given him trouble enough. But it wasn't because he had erred greatly. The boy had lived squarely before God and man, according to his lights, as his mountaineer father before him had done.

Tennessee Joe fastened his clothing, and went creeping toward the water's edge. He was barely in time to see a dimly outlined yawl containing three men go moving off, and by that he knew that the chase was given up. Tragedy was in the air, and it beckoned to the lad's adventurous spirit. He did not pause until he had reached the river—and there he stumbled over a man's limp leg.

The man was soaking wet, and he didn't

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move. It was, of course, the fugitive. Joe knelt and examined him hastily, and he soon learned that the heart of the stranger was going strongly.

"Playin' 'possum?" whispered Joe, smiling. "Friend, you needn't be afraid o' me. I ain't nothin' but a boy, but I'm all right and all white. Did they hit you when they shot, friend? If they did, maybe you want a doctor for yourself. Eh, friend?"

The man sat up. Evidently he had decided that the lad was to be no enemy of his.

"Son," he muttered, "I can't help but believe that you are, as you say, 'all right and all white.' Yes, the bullet hit me. They potted me as I jumped from the wharf. It went through my right hip, and now my right leg is numb. But I don't dare to have a doctor. The best I can hope for is a place to lie up for a few days. I'll be all right then, I think, unless that leg stays paralyzed."

"You've got the place to lie up," replied Joe. "Come on. Le' me he'p you to it, friend."

For one reason, he would be helping in the foiling of the police; for another reason, he was human. A few minutes more saw them inside the boy's lair. Joe then closed the door and applied a burning match to a candle on the pine box. The man sank down on the bed of straw, and Joe sat down before him.

"It isn't bleeding," the man said, after a hurried examination. "It's a clean wound, all right."

THE tiny light of the tallow dip showed the boy a lean and much sunburned man, who was rather well dressed in gray Summer clothing, with linen that had been very white before the muddy waters of the Mississippi had soiled it; a man of about twenty-five, whose face was good-looking when one grew a little accustomed to its real strength—for the stranger was anything except a weakling.

"Well?" he smiled, when Tennessee Joe had looked at him in appraisal for a full minute; and it was quite wonderful how his face softened with that smile.

"I reckon interductions 'd be about the thing," began the boy. "My name is Joseph Bob Taylor Tilson, but they calls me Tennessee Joe; I named myself that, after my daddy. He was a logger, and he was as square as they ever make 'em. He got killed by a skidder line, and my mother jest natch'ally died out a few weeks after that. Mister, she cried herself to death.

"I found I couldn't stand it there in the woods after that, so I hikes it for N'Orleans. I been here, dodgin' rescue s'cieties that tries to doll a feller up, for two years. I make a decent livin' sellin' papers, I live here all by my lonesome, I don't never have no visitors, and I hate the coppers with a reg'lar Tennessee hate. That's all the' is to tell about me. And you?"

It was a sincere bid for the man's confidence. He smiled again, and reached for the small but hard, sunbrowned hand of his cordial little host.

"Son," he drawled in a drawl that was somewhat like that of the Southland, "you're all to the mustard. I'd rather trust you than anybody else I know, almost; and when I say 'trust,' I mean *trust:* I mean I put my life in your hands." (He had to do it anyway!) "Son," he went on, "I'm what you'd likely call 'in bad.' In bad in somebody else's place. You called me 'friend,' Tennessee. I'll try to be it, sure. And I want you to be mine. For if ever a man needed a friend, it's me, Tennessee Joe. My name is plain Charley Davidson, and this is how I came to be in the hole I'm in:

"I'm a Westerner, Tennessee. I used to be what they call out there 'pizen mean.' I could drink more nose-paint than forty Navaho sots; and I could shoot faster than a Gatling—and do my own reloading, at that. But three years ago I went down to San Antone to do some fancy buckaroo work, and there I met a girl. She was from here, from New Orleans, and she was sure some girl.

"I—I fell in love with her, Tennessee. I decided to hit the straight trail, and I did, and I kept right in the middle of it. You understand, boy, I'd been bad, but I'd been clean in my badness. The girl was wealthy. So I went to acting as though I were rich myself—I let on that I owned a ranch. There I was a fool, son. But I was so crazy about her that I didn't know any better.

"So," Davidson continued, "I decided I simply had to make good. I decided to own a ranch! In three years I did it, by buying and selling cattle and by working day and night. All this time I kept up

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a correspondence with the girl. Last week I wrote her and confessed everything, and told her I was coming to New Orleans after her; and the next day I boarded a train for this little village of yours.

"Now listen, Tennessee. When I got here, I found the girl poorer than I ever was. Her dad had lost all he had, and then died, and she was supporting her mother and herself by working in a big department store. Her mother told me all this. So I went straight to Sleiger & Bechman's to see her. I was almost glad she was poor, because I had enough for all three of us. I found her at the jewelry counter, and I could tell she was worried half to death over something. When I walked up and took her hand, she bent her head and began to sob.

" 'Get your hat,' I said. 'You're leaving this place right now.'

"You see, she'd already confessed that she—well, that she cared for me. The floor-walker came up and interfered, and I handled him pretty rough, breaking a jewelry-case in the round. Before they arrested me, I persuaded Millie to go home and wait for me there, and then I paid the damage and paid my fine and went after Millie. There the girl told me that old Sleiger—both he and his partner are bachelors, and Bechman is superstitious in the bargain—that old Sleiger had laid a regular black-hand plot against her.

"He'd claimed some diamonds were missing, and then let on that he'd found them in Millie's hand-bag; then he'd tried to bluff her into marrying him in order to keep herself out of trouble. It was the thinnest, cheapest, most ungodly plot you can imagine. The only good feature of it was that he'd said nothing about it to anybody save Millie.

"The girl, Tennessee, never meant to accept him. But she asked for three days in which to come to a decision, because she wanted to think. I blew in on the second of these three days. When Millie told me about Sleiger's villainous scheme, I saw red. I got 'pizen mean' again. I forgot myself, and went to Sleiger & Bechman's with blood in both eyes.

" 'Where is that rattlesnake, Sleiger?' I asked the floor-walker.

" 'What do you want of him?' the floor-walker demanded.

" 'I'll show you,' I snapped, 'what I want of him!'

"Then I caught sight of the office in the rear of the store, and I went straight to it. The office-boy told me that Sleiger had gone to the basement, and there I went. It was a sort of wareroom. The lights were on. I found the man I was looking for lying down there dead, with an iron bar lying beside him; he had been struck from behind, and it had just been done. Now, Tennessee, do you see what a fix I was in?"

"Yes," nodded young Tilson.

"Well," Davidson ran on, "I started back up-stairs to give the alarm. I met the floor-walker and a policeman, and the policeman arrested me. Sleiger was found, and Bechman accused me of his murder. I saw that the case was black against me, and I knew I had to escape. So I wrenched myself loose from the officer, and ran for the river, which was only a block away. You know the rest.

"Only," he continued, "I didn't tell you this. Sleiger and Bechman each have their lives insured to each other, and their wills made to each other—the floor-walker told Millie and Millie told me. It had got on their nerves, and each seemed to be afraid of the other. Can you see anything significant in that?"

"Yes," answered the lad. "Bechman killed him, o' course."

"Sure!" exclaimed Davidson. "But how can I prove it?"

Tennessee Joe shook his head.

Davidson spent most of the rest of that night in trying to evolve a plan, and Tennessee Joe sat up with him and also tried to evolve a plan. When morning had dawned, young Tilson turned to his new friend with his eyes shining with hope.

"Didn't you say Bechman was afraid o' ha'nts?"

"Yes," said the Westerner; "that is, I said he was superstitious. That's his weak point, eh? You're thinking of attacking him there, Tennessee?"

"Sure thing. He was afraid, and he was nervous, and his conscience is raisin' Cain with him right now," declared the boy. "Listen here. I got a scheme. You got plenty o' money?"

"Yes—enough, anyway, for ordinary purposes. How much do you want?"

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"About twenty-five bones, friend. Here's my scheme——"

He outlined it. Davidson was not so greatly impressed with it, but there was nothing better that he could think of. He took twenty-five dollars in wet bank-notes from his pocketbook, and passed it to the newsboy.

"You put this thing across," he smiled, "and Millie and her mother and I will take you out West to our cattle-ranch, and give you a good home, a paint pony and saddle, and a rifle gun."

Tennessee Joe grinned.

"The' ain't nothin' finer in heaven," he said.

First he went to a restaurant and brought back breakfast for himself and for Davidson. Then he started for Millie's little suburban home, and he reached it before the morning paper arrived with news of the Westerner's death. He found Millie Bronson all that her sweetheart had said she was. When he had told them all he had come to tell them, both Millie and her mother kissed him.

IN THE afternoon occurred Sleiger's funeral, and the big department store was closed. On the morning of the next day, Tilson very diplomatically hired Bechman's office-boy to quit, and stepped into his place; Joe had dressed himself in new clothing, and he made a very presentable appearance. He found Bechman sour, troubled, and hard to please; now and then he looked behind him, too.

It was not until the fourth day of his employment as Bechman's office-boy that he found it possible to steal out a fair sample of Sleiger's peculiarly cramped handwriting and a small roll of Sleiger & Bechman's letter-heads. These he carried triumphantly to Charley Davidson, who was still in hiding in the under-the-wharf lair, and recuperating rapidly. With the sample of Sleiger's handwriting to serve as a pattern, Davidson painstakingly wrote on twenty of the letter-heads this sentence, which was according to Tennessee Joe's scheme:

You are soon to die, Godfrey. Confess to the murder.

On the following morning, Tilson thrust one of these sheets through a tiny crack between the slats of the top of Bechman's desk. And when Bechman unlocked his desk, there it was, apparently in his dead partner's handwriting, staring up at him accusingly! Bechman's conscience had been gnawing hard; aided by his superstition, he was soon on the verge of a collapse.

Less than twenty-four hours later, Bechman found another of these warnings lying on his dresser. He went to bed, and sent for a doctor. The physician pronounced his nerves in a woful state. And that afternoon still another warning came through the mail, and the envelope bore a special-delivery stamp!

For days it went like this. They found their way under his pillows, into his pocket, under his breakfast plate—everywhere, thanks to the slyness and the resourcefulness of Tennessee Joe; and Bechman grew steadily worse.

Then one fluttered in at his bedroom window, and immediately after that they sent Bechman to a private sanatorium. Tennessee Joe followed him to the sanatorium, and the warnings kept appearing at the most unexpected times and in the most unexpected places. Bechman's nerves convinced him that he was going to die. They put him to sleep by means of a hypodermic injection, and when he woke he had in his hand another one of those:

You are soon to die, Godfrey. Confess to the murder.

Bechman sent for a priest whom he knew. Two conscientious physicians and a nurse heard his confession, and that afternoon the papers were full of it. Then Tilson went to the wharf with a taxi, and Davidson limped into it, and twenty minutes later there was a sort of reunion at the home of the Bronsons.

And Tennessee Joe went to the great wide West with Davidson and his wife and his wife's mother, and there they gave him a good home. Also, they gave him a paint pony and a rifle gun, than which there was nothing finer in heaven.

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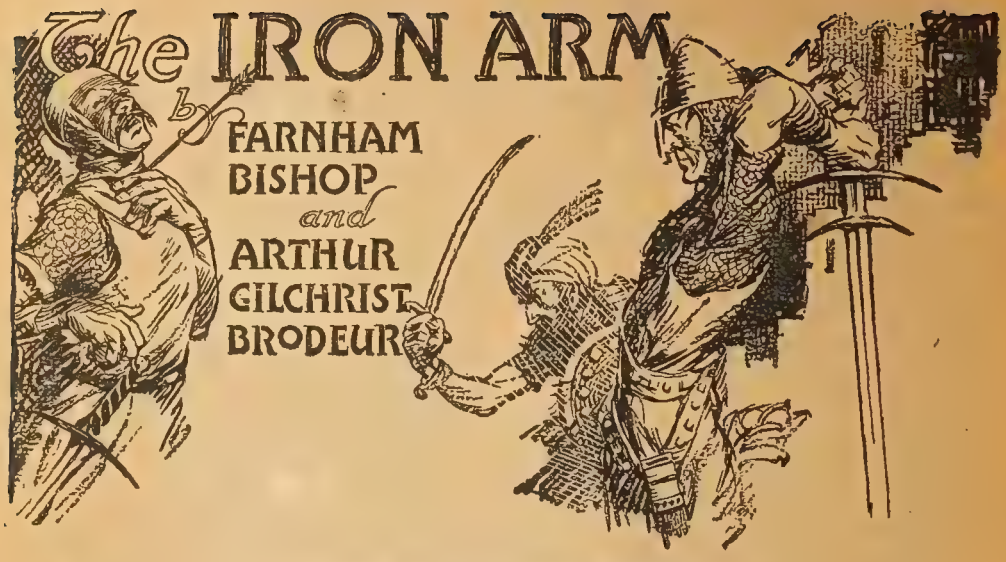
The IRON ARM



by FARNHAM BISHOP and ARTHUR GILCHRIST BRODEUR

Authors of "Two Strong Men," "The Golden Snare," etc.

ARNULFO, Count of Rocca Forte, lay on his well-cushioned bed, shaking with ague and cursing as vehemently as his chattering teeth could spit out the words. He cursed in all the tongues of twelfth century Sicily: in Norman-French, in Greek, in Arabic, and then reverted to Norman-French. His daughter Fulvia hastened to his bedside, heaped the covers about him, and began to stroke his forehead.

"This is the second chill in four days," she said anxiously to the physician.

"Yes, my lady. It is the quartan fever," the old Saracen doctor answered. "Lift him up, that I may give him his medicine."

Arnulfo struggled against her with all the strength his sickness permitted; but he shook so hard and her young arms were so strong that he was obliged to submit. Ibn Hawwas, the physician, forced the bitter potion between the patient's teeth; sweat broke out on his cold forehead, and the ague left him. His bold, wasted features twisted into a wry grin, Arnulfo spat disgustedly.

"Yours is good medicine, Hawwas," he snorted, "but it tastes like the liquid sulfur that Lucifer gives to damned souls. Some day you will feed it to me once too often, and I will split your skull for you."

The Mohammedan smiled gently, and moved the lamp away from the bedside, that it might not dazzle his patient's eyes. Ibn Hawwas was a wiry little old Arab with hawk face and inscrutable black eyes. Gentle as a woman, he was utterly fearless, and paid small heed to his master's threats. Wise and just, Count Arnulfo was not the man to harm a faithful and skilled physician who had learned his art in the schools of Palermo and Bagdad.

"When that time comes, I must seek another master," he laughed.

"Whose name will be Satan, the proper lord of heathen unbelievers," Arnulfo snapped. "But you did not make me take your filthy medicine this morning, for I threw it out the window."

"Which is precisely the reason Sheik Arnulfo had this chill tonight. But you will throw no more medicine out the window, my lord, for I have asked the Lady Fulvia to be present whenever you take it."

The Count of Rocca Forte threw a baleful glance at his lovely daughter, who sat on the edge of his bed, twisting her tawny hair anxiously about her fingers. Her face was white with distress; but very firm. Well Arnulfo knew that it was useless to oppose her: so long as she watched by his bedside, he would obey the physician's orders.

"Physic is only fit for women and fools," he growled. "I am a man, strong enough to face death, which will come soon enough

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now. I am old, and not all the medicines in the world can keep off the infirmities of age. My day is done."

"If Shiek Arnulfo does as I bid him, he will live long enough to bury the last of his enemies," Ibn Hawwas assured him.

"Long enough to fatten the doctors, rather," Arnulfo scoffed. "You two know that I will not live a month. The strength in my body is turned to water. Men used to call me Arnulfo Bras-de-Fer: 'Arnulfo of the Iron Arm.' Look at me now!"

He thrust out two lean and corded arms, wasted with sickness, but still powerful.

"I could not choke a chicken with these. The first good fighter that storms my keep will break me in two like a dry stick."

Ibn Hawwas cast a cynical glance at the thick walls about him. The sick-chamber was on the second floor of the keep of the castle: a strong square tower pierced with arrow-slots, dark even at noon. A stone cast from one of the slots on the western side would have dropped straight down the wall and the sheer cliff below, into the mouth of the bay. Across the room, a wide and winding stair, built of huge stone slabs, led down to the lofty hall, itself capable of resisting almost any assault.

Hall and keep together formed a fortress within a fortress, separated by a dry moat from the flagged courtyard of the bailey or outer fortified inclosure, where stood the stables and the barracks of the garrison. The entire castle stood on the summit of a dizzy crag, which rose perpendicularly out of the sea, and swept in breathless slopes to the east, like the head and shoulders of a prostrate giant struggling to rise. This crag was Rocca Forte: the Strong Rock, from which castle, town, and country took their name.

Headland and castle faced across the narrow entrance of a land-locked harbor, and dominated both that entrance and the sea outside; within, the harbor broadened into an oval basin capable of sheltering a considerable fleet, and bordered with villages. At the head of the harbor, the town of Rocca Forte lay a scant mile distant from the shelter of the rock and its crowning castle; near the entrance, on the side opposite the fortress, the village of the Mohammedan fisherfolk, Arnulfo's tenants, nestled in a quiet cove. Inland, at a little distance, the great blue Sicilian mountains thrust their sharp peaks into the sky.

The castle was accessible to enemies from only one direction: the eastern or landward side of the headland, where the crag sloped less precipitately. Here a walled ramp led down to a compact little stone blockhouse whose gates, wide enough to admit two horsemen abreast, opened on the main road to Palermo. To win the castle, an attacking force must first win the blockhouse, then fight their way up the zigzag ramp, with stones and arrows pelting upon them from the walls, cross the wide outer moat, and scale or batter the towered and battlemented wall of the bailey.

If the attackers succeeded in this, they might force the defenders inside the granite-built hall, and lay siege to them there. If the foemen won the hall, they had yet to clear the twisting stair and storm the keep. And both the hall gate, and that leading from the bailey to the ramp, were each protected by drawbridge and portcullis, to say nothing of the deep moat beneath each narrow bridge.

So, thinking of these things, and gazing at the old Norman's mighty arms, Ibn Hawwas chuckled quietly.

"Your keep itself is no stronger than those muscles of yours," he retorted.

"Then God help Rocca Forte!" Arnulfo cried. "As for you, my daughter—" and his voice became wistful as he looked at the beautiful girl—"I must provide a good husband for you before I die. You are too fair to leave to the mercies of the first bandit who takes a fancy to you. You must marry a man of strong hands and stern heart, who can swing a sword and captain a few score lances."

Fulvia's red lips drew into a firm line, and she shook her head; but the old count persisted.

"Some one such as I was in my youth," he went on. "All my life I have toiled and fought to hold and increase this pleasant land. It is all for you, Fulvia. I have no son; you are my only child, my sole hope. I have lived but for you. Now that I am dying I must leave you in full, safe possession of Rocca Forte. There is only one way: a good marriage."

Again Fulvia shook her head.

"I can hold the land for myself," she asserted. "I should like to see the man who can take it from me. But you have many years yet to live, my father."

Arnulfo ignored her protest.

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"The land is full of desperate men," he said. "All the coast lies open to the raids of the Moorish pirates—meaning no ill to the peaceful men of your race in our towns, Hawwas—the Greeks of Constantinople still hunger for the rich spoils of Sicily; our own Normans too often turn thieves and harry their own kindred. You must marry, and that speedily."

"When I find a man as good as my father, a man I can love and respect, I will marry him," the girl answered. "But till then I will remain as I am. Let us speak of this no more."

Arnulfo's blue eyes blazed.

"We will speak of it, you little fool!" he thundered. "You think, because you had the luck to outwit Ricoberto the fop and Fulk the dolt a few months ago, and captured their galleys by a trick, that you can hold your own against men! Wait till some sturdy fellow with a host of ruffians and a brain in his skull sets eyes on you and on Rocca Forte. You will wish then that you had your old father back, or at the worst a good husband to protect you."

"I will never take a husband to protect me," Fulvia quietly replied.

A STEP rang on the flagged floor of the landing, and a hand shook the curtains that served for a door. Hawwas flung the hangings aside, and admitted a short, thick-set man in stained leather. Arnulfo greeted him with bluff cordiality.

"Welcome, Alberic! Jaufré announced your coming; but as you see, I am in ill condition to meet a guest. My poor house is yours as long as it pleases you to stay; you will pardon my absence from table."

Alberic bowed. He was a surly-looking man, of abnormally short stature, but with huge swinging shoulders and enormous chest and arms. His hair blazed a fiery red, and his eyes were green and baneful. He took Arnulfo's hand in a hairy paw.

"You will be well enough soon, Arnulfo," he replied, "and will be up again, hanging thieves and cleaving skulls as usual. But I heard that you were sick, and came here with a purpose. In short, I have a request to make of you."

Arnulfo waved his hand.

"Speak out," he urged. "If you do not want too much, I will grant it."

Alberic turned his evil eyes toward Fulvia; and during the next few moments he never looked away from her.

"You know me, Arnulfo," he began, "for a man of few words and many deeds. You know how I rose from a poor adventurer in the service of Ranulf the Red-handed to be ruler of half Apulia. That required a sharp sword, a quick wit, and ready courage. I was at the siege of Bari; I stormed the gates of Capua with King Roger; I killed ten men with my own hand at the battle of Rignano. I have a castle at Diamante and another at San Marco. I am both powerful and rich. There is no man in Sicily who would not be glad of my friendship, no Norman baron who would not give his hand to have me for son-in-law.

"The request I came to make is this: you are an old man, and sick; you may not last long. You have wide lands and a fair daughter, both of which will soon need a protector. I ask your daughter's hand in marriage. Will you give her to me?"

Arnulfo turned haggard eyes toward his daughter.

"This fits well with my own thoughts," he said grimly. "It is true that I could hardly hope for a stronger son-in-law. If Fulvia will have you, I consent. Think well, Fulvia; there are few men in Sicily who can stand against Alberic the Lombard."

Fulvia's face was stormy; but after a little it broke into smiles, and her blue eyes flashed mischievously.

"Tell me, Seignior Alberic," she laughed, "your hair is red, is it not?"

Flushing angrily, Alberic glared at her.

"It is plain to all the world that my hair is red," he answered hotly. "What of it?"

"Was not the hair of Judas red?" Fulvia shot at him.

"What do you mean?" the Lombard snarled. "What is the color of a man's hair to you? If my arm is strong, that is all that concerns you."

Fulvia's face grew grave, but laughter still sparkled in her eyes.

"I do not like red hair," she pouted. "I could not marry a man who resembled Judas. You must woo elsewhere, Seignior."

Alberic swelled like a turkey-cock; but before he could give vent to his anger Arnulfo interposed, with a dark look at his daughter.

"The Lady Fulvia means to say," he

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explained with cold dignity, "that she will consider your offer, Seignior Alberic, and will give you your answer tomorrow. You will do us the honor to remain our guest."

Alberic bowed, and withdrew with a surly swagger.

"Now, wench!" Arnulfo exploded, as soon as the Lombard's footsteps died away. "What in the fiend's name do you mean by insulting my guest? Red hair, indeed! Your own hair is not so far from red. Why do you refuse the most powerful baron in the South, and for such a childish pretext?"

Fulvia's eyes grew stern.

"Because he is the worst man in the South," she answered. "I compared him to Judas because his life has been that of a traitor. You heard him boast of his deeds; do you not know that every one of them has been treacherous, that he has risen to wealth and power by betraying those who trusted him? He began by betraying Ranulf, his master; with lies and gold and not with steel did he help win Capua for King Roger and Bari for the Emperor Lothair. He persuaded the Pope to take arms against King Roger, and then betrayed the Pope's line of march to the king. Would you force your daughter, whom you say you love, to marry such a man?"

"Hold, hold!" Arnulfo protested, grinning, in spite of himself, at the girl's voluble anger. "When you are roused, you are like your mother; and at all times you are hard to move. These tales of treachery are black enough, I own; but there is little enough foundation for them, child. Peasant's gossip, nothing more. Even if they are true, there is no proof of them, and few men nowadays have won their titles more honestly. But if you are determined not to have him, why did you not say so, instead of insulting the man?"

"Is it more of an insult to object to his hair than to accuse him of his crimes to his face?"

Arnulfo sighed wearily.

"At least he would be loyal enough to his wife," he urged. "It is to his own interest to keep faith with us; and in a pinch, he will be as honest as the next man. You would best give him a softer answer tomorrow."

"I will give him the same answer, or a worse one," Fulvia retorted.

Her father's face grew dark; but before he could reply, the feet of men in haste rang on the stone stairs of the keep. Excitedly, Arnulfo strove to rise; but Fulvia held him in his bed.

The hangings were thrust unceremoniously aside, and two men-at-arms in mail strode in. One was Jaufré, captain of the garrison, the other was no Rocca Forte man, but a gangling, pockmarked giant, called Jehan the Tall, a follower of Gaimar of Castrocavalli, whose lands lay a day's and a night's ride to the south and east. From his weary eyes, stiff limbs, and the thick dust that clogged every ring of his chain-mail, Jehan the Tall looked as if he had ridden the distance in something less than a night and a day.

"Aid, Seignior, aid, for the love of Christ and all his saints!" he cried in a voice that was almost a croak from thirst and exhaustion. "My Lord Gaimar's heathen got into the bailey last night, the devil knows how, and slew more than half of us before we could retreat into the keep. Siegnior Gaimar holds the keep with a handful of Normans; but their food is well-nigh gone, and the Saracens have contrived to pierce the cistern-wall and defile the water. Four of us were sent out for help; I alone won through alive. If aid does not come speedily the Moslem dogs will starve my master out!"

Arnulfo swore passionately.

"And I lie here bedridden, good for nothing, while Christians perish!" he cried. "Not that I have any love for Gaimar: God knows he has been a bad enough neighbor to me. But that I should rest idle while Normans are slaughtered by unbelievers!"

"What else do you expect of unbelievers?" It was the voice of Alberic the Lombard, who stood in the doorway, his ill-favored face turned toward Ibn Hawwas. "You are lucky enough, Arnulfo, that your Saracen leech here has not poisoned you. If King Roger *will* truckle to the heathen, we Christians have no resource but our swords."

"Speak for your own Saracens," Arnulfo answered bluntly. "Mine have always been faithful. But Gaimar has been a bad master to all his tenantry, Moslem and Christian alike: his gibbets and torture-chamber have never been empty. He has only himself to thank for this. Nonetheless, I will not go back on my own race and faith. Jaufré, saddle at once and ride to

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the rescue with the entire garrison, save only enough to hold the castle."

Alberic laughed abruptly.

"Your castle will keep itself," he jibed. "The cliff it stands on defies the very eagles. I had the fiend's own ride up the road from the town to reach it. Your men could ride away for a month, and no one would risk his bones to attack. Save for that purgatory of a road, there is no access to your gate, and once your drawbridge is up and your portcullis is down, the girl here could hold the place."

Fulvia's eyes, dark with suspicion, rested on Alberic's; but the Lombard bore her gaze well. She whispered in her father's ear, and Arnulfo answered:

"That may be, but I am too old a soldier to leave my castle undefended. Be off with you, Jaufré, and leave a dozen men—all Normans—under the command of Hugh. Let Jehan be fed and shown a place to sleep—and bid the steward set the best in the kitchen and cellar before our guest, Seignior Alberic."

"Nay, by my father's soul!" Alberic exclaimed. "I will not rest when there is good fighting to be had. I will summon my men as quickly as may be, and ride out after your lads to Gaimar's rescue."

"Why not ride with Jaufré?" Arnulfo queried. "Your fellows are encamped at the foot of the rock, are they not?"

Alberic laughed.

"They were, till I gave them leave," he said. "Now they are doubtless carousing in the taverns of the town, and it will be a pretty task to get a score of them together sober. Let Jaufré go on and I will follow."

He ran lightly down the stairs, hard on Jaufré's heels.

"You see, my daughter," Arnulfo admonished, "how you wronged the man. He hates Gaimar, yet he hastens to aid him rather than see a Christian perish."

Fulvia shrugged her shapely shoulders.

TUMBLING into their saddles, the Rocca Forte men rode clanking and jingling down the long ramp, through the blockhouse gate, and, leaving the town on their right, swung off toward the southeast and the beleaguered castle. Gaimar's territory, Castrocavalli, was twenty hours away, and Rocca Forte must get on for twice that time at least with a scant dozen defenders.

Torches flared from the walls, from blockhouse—stripped now of all but two armed men—from bailey, hall, and keep, to light the way for Alberic's force of mercenaries, whom their master had sent for by one of his two body-servants, with the order to assemble and await him in the road just outside the blockhouse. Alberic had not asked permission to bring them within the walls, for he declared his intention of riding off as soon as they were ready to march. Nor did Arnulfo abate his usual strict watch; as soon as Jaufré and his horsemen were gone the outer drawbridge was raised and the portcullis lowered. The times were too perilous for negligence.

Two hours passed. The household went to sleep; the six Norman men-at-arms in the keep slept by their arms. Only the two in the blockhouse and four men at the castle gate kept vigil. At last Alberic's messenger returned, announcing that his lord's soldiers were at the foot of the ramp, armed, and reasonably sober. Admitted by the two at the blockhouse, the messenger climbed the ramp, was challenged at the gate, and asked that word be sent to his master.

Alberic was ready and waiting in the gate-house, attended by his other body-servant and Jehan the Tall. To let them out, the four guards bent to the windlasses, the iron portcullis creaked slowly up, and was made fast.

At that instant, while the guards, two at each windlass, were still stooping over their work, Alberic swept out his long sword and cut down the two nearest him from behind, with two swift strokes. At the same moment, Jehan the Tall and the servant stabbed the other two. It was done without noise or bungling and without giving the betrayed the slightest chance to defend themselves.

Lowering the drawbridge, the traitors opened the gates and made their way down the ramp. There was no one to see, no one to challenge them till they reached the blockhouse. There they would be four against two, with a host of their own fellows waiting impatiently outside. Alberic the Lombard left little to chance.

Jehan the Tall laid a hand on Alberic's arm.

"Before we go farther, give me what you promised," he whispered.

"You have not earned it yet," Alberic

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balked. "There are still the guards at the blockhouse."

"Give it to me now, or I will rouse the castle," Jehan countered. "When Gaimar turned me out, a fortnight ago, did you not send for me and swear that you required me only to ride here with a false tale of a Saracen revolt, and draw off the garrison? I did not agree to do your butcher's work for you, yet have I done that too. Once your men are in, you will mock at me. Hand me my money."

A horse neighed down by the blockhouse; there came the jingle of mail and the voices of men.

"Go back within," Alberic told his two servants, "and wait till I call you."

When the others had gone—

"Will you help me kill the guards in the blockhouse, or will you go hence empty-handed?" the Lombard asked.

"If I thought you meant to dismiss me unpaid—" Jehan began.

"Why not?" Alberic retorted. "Why should I pay you at all? The two guards down below can not hold off my men if I bid them rush the gate, and I have only to hang you."

"The gold at once, or I cry out and alarm those who guard the keep!" Jehan answered.

"So be it, then." Alberic reached for his purse. "Come close and see that I count it honestly."

Jehan drew close to him. Taking out a fistful of gold coins, Alberic counted them out with one hand. As the third coin fell into Jehan's palm, Alberic's free hand shot swiftly up from his girdle and drove the thin blade of a long dagger straight through Jehan's throat. Without a sound, the tall man fell dead, his empty steel cap clanging on the stone. Alberic whistled once; his two men ran down from the castle gate, and a startled challenge rang from the blockhouse.

THE faint clang of metal in her ears, Fulvia started from sleep. A moment later she heard the sentinels challenge from the blockhouse, and following that, a short, sharp clash of steel on steel. Swiftly she sprang from her couch at the foot of her father's bed, threw on her mantle and ran to the narrow arrow-slot in the tower wall, which overlooked the inner gate of the blockhouse at the foot of the ramp. Through that gate a host of men was pouring silently; up the ramp they streamed, toward the outer drawbridge and the entrance to the bailey. And the outer drawbridge, she could see, was down.

Mastering the fear that drove the blood from her face and set her heart thumping, Fulvia sped down the great stair of the keep. Within the hall, just at the foot, six surviving defenders were sleeping. She thrust at their mailed ribs with her foot, crying:

"Treason! Treason! To arms!"

Hugh, the leader, leaped to his feet; and roused by his shout of command, the others sprang to their weapons. Crossing the hall, they looked out through its open doorway across the wide courtyard of the bailey, just as the foremost of the assailants came surging in through the outer gate, where the four murdered men lay beside their windlasses, the floor wet with their blood.

At the sight of the six before them, the attackers raised a bloodthirsty roar and swept charging across the courtyard, Alberic's squat figure and flashing sword in the lead. The inner drawbridge, across the dry moat between the bailey and the hall, was down; it had not been raised since the last siege, nearly thirty years before, for Count Arnulfo liked to show his faith in his men's loyalty. Now there was no time to wind up rusty chains on long-disused windlasses. The portcullis, too, was rusted into the guides; Hugh wrenched the release-catch over, but the massive grating stuck fast and refused to fall.

"The doors!" he shouted, leaping back inside the hall. "Close and bar the doors!"

Already his men were tugging at the massive double doors of six-inch oak, studded with great iron nails, that opened inward and now were folded back against the thickness of the wall on either side of the doorway. Fulvia stood ready with the heavy bar, ready to drop it into place as soon as the doors were closed. But though the men-at-arms strove with the strength of despair, they could not budge either of the doors more than a few inches from the wall. They could not see, in the half-dark, the iron wedges which the crafty Alberic, an hour before, had placed under each door.

"Back!" cried Hugh. "To the stair!"

And thrusting himself before them with sword and shield, he stayed to cover their retreat. The little garrison turned and ran

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like hunted deer across the hall, Hugh backing after them, lashing out with his heavy blade at the foremost of the assailants. They pressed him close, hacking at him from front and sides; but his armor held, his shield warded off blow after blow, and his sword drew blood at every stroke.

As they reached the stair a tall Rocca Forte man swung Fulvia off her feet and thrust her as far up the stairway as he could reach. Forming across the third step, the defenders made place for Hugh, as he backed panting among them, and then locked shields from wall to wall. Before them, the assailants gathered for a rush.

"Lady Fulvia!" cried Hugh. "Haste to the tower top and kindle the bale-fire!"

Swiftly the girl rushed up the stairs, her mind still confused with the abrupt wakening, the terrible attack, the horror of blood—but fixed and clear with the purpose inspired by Hugh's command. She must light the beacon as quickly as she could, that Jaufré and his horsemen might see, and turn back to the rescue.

Then, like the onrush of a tidal wave, Alberic's motley host of mercenaries swept upon the defenders. In the inadequate torchlight, assailants and assailed fought desperately together. The light, such as it was, favored the attackers; position favored the garrison, for they were higher than their enemies, and no more than their own number could attack at once.

Besides, they were protected behind their interlocked shields; the attackers climbed up pell-mell, interfering with one another's movements; and often, what with the impetus of their rush and the weight of those behind, what with the obstacle of the stair, they stumbled, and their weapons bit into their comrades' flesh. And always the long swords of the devoted six flashed out surely, slashing through mail and bone.

Again and again Alberic urged his mercenaries on; time and again they charged, only to be hurled against the staircase, or torn by the terrible swords of the Normans. Not a cry, not a word did the defenders return to the yells of their adversaries, save at the end of each onslaught. Then, while the enemy reformed for a fresh advance, the Rocca Forte men shouted in unison the battle-cry of Arnulfo:

"*Bras-de-Fer!* Arm of Iron!"

And as the onset gathered and crashed upon them, they met it grimly and silently, and hurled it back crushed and bleeding. As seven hundred men of their race had dyed the plains of Canne, a hundred years before, with the blood of ten thousand Greeks, so these six Normans drove back the motley mixed-breeds of Alberic, till the Lombard had to beat his bleeding men-at-arms to the fight with blows and curses.

At last, desperate with repeated failure, Alberic flung himself on the devoted Hugh, whose mighty arms were weary with warding and striking. The Lombard's sword sheared through Hugh's shield, and laid open hand and wrist beneath. Suppressing the pain, Hugh drove for his opponent's throat, but Alberic darted back. Before Hugh could recover, the Lombard swung his blade with both hands and brought it down upon the faithful soldier's helmet. Through steel and flesh and bone it tore, and Hugh fell headlong down into the hall. Before his men could close the gap, Alberic's horde swarmed upon them, yelling triumphantly.

AS SHE came to the landing off which her father's chamber opened, Fulvia darted a swift glance within the room. Arnulfo, awakened by the din, was standing in the middle of the chamber, swaying dizzily, and frantically trying to put on his clothes.

"Who attacks?" he cried, as he set eyes on her.

"Alberic the traitor!" she answered. "Go back to bed, father; you can do nothing, and your fever will return."

"Help me on with my armor!" he retorted, his worn features alight with longing for battle.

"Go to bed, or I return to the hall at once, and give myself over to Alberic!"

With a curse, Arnulfo flung himself down upon the pillows. Fulvia dashed up a second flight of stairs and then a third, to the top of the great tower. Rushing across the platform, she flung open the door of a ventilated stone closet, took from it an oil lamp whose flame was never allowed to go out, and raised it toward a great iron basket filled with flax and pitch-smeared wood: the bale-fire which would summon Jaufré and his horsemen to the rescue.

But before she could touch the flame to the dry flax, a hand plucked her sleeve. With a startled cry, she turned. It was the old Saracen physician, Ibn Hawwas.

"It is too late for that, my lady," he said.

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"They are in the hills by now, and will not see. I have a better plan."

He held up a thick coil of rope.

"Make this fast to a merlon, and I will descend it and go for help. It is the only way."

Fulvia stared at him, wild thoughts racing through her mind. Why should she not descend the rope herself? She was stronger than old Hawwas, swifter of foot.

"No, Lady Fulvia," he warned, reading her thoughts. "You must stay with your father; his fever is higher with his excitement. He longs to fling himself into the fight, and I can not restrain him. Moreover, this is my affair. By giving the alarm with the bale-fire, you will put on their guard such men as Alberic has doubtless left to hold the blockhouse. And they could easily beat off such help as might come from the town yonder; its men are too unwarlike.

"But across the harbor-mouth dwell the fishermen, men of my own race and faith, strong, fierce and trained to arms. They fought under your father's banner in King Roger's wars overseas. I am an alcaide among them, and they will listen to me."

Fulvia nodded silently, made one end of the rope fast to one of the merlons or tooth-like erections of the battlements, and cast the coil into the darkness. As it dropped into the silent night, a horrible thought shot through her brain.

"It is too thin!" she exclaimed.

"My weight is that of a child!" the old Arab replied.

"But even so, you can not descend such a slender line hand under hand—it is too thin for you to grasp fairly. It will cut like a wire—it will cut your palms and fingers to the bone and you will fall!"

"Your father's seamen have taught you well, my lady. Now let me teach you that a thick linen cloth, such as I have here, soaked in water, may be wrapped 'round and 'round the rope, so, and grasped in both hands, may enable one to slide down with untorn palms."

"Is the rope long enough?" she cried anxiously. In the dark, the distance from the dizzy tower-top to the sea it overhung seemed infinite.

"Easily. I know the science of algebra, and have calculated the height precisely."

And grasping the rope, Ibn Hawwas descended into the black gulf as calmly as he would have gone to his chamber.

For what seemed an eternity, Fulvia gazed down after him, her right hand anxiously grasping the taut line. Suddenly she felt it relax and hang limp! Her heart stopped beating as she leaned out through an embrasure, with eyes and ears straining to the utmost. Seconds passed—she had seen no gleam of foam, heard no splash of a falling body. So she knew that Ibn Hawwas must have descended the height safely and that he was now swimming across the harbor-mouth.

With a prayer to the saints to help the Moslem on his way, Fulvia sped down the tower stairs to her father's chamber. It was quiet—too quiet, and pitch dark. Groping for flint and steel, she struck a light. Arnulfo was not there! She glanced up at the wall; his armor was gone! Gone, too, were his sword and triangular shield. She ran down the stairs toward the hall in a panic of fear. If he had joined the fighting, sick as he was, he would fall a helpless victim to Alberic's rascals.

She came upon her father suddenly, at a turn of the staircase. He was full-armored, his head surmounted with his great conical helmet, his shield held before his body. Leaning on his mighty sword, the sick man watched the unequal battle rage below him.

He turned as she reached his side.

"They hold their own well," he muttered, half to her, half to himself. "Hugh is dead, and Godefroi is wounded; but the others hold the wolves at bay. I am not needed yet."

"You must not go down," Fulvia whispered in his ear.

As she spoke, the din below burst into fresh fury; shouts were redoubled; steel clanged on steel. Arnulfo turned his face to his daughter; in the half-light she could see that it was flushed and stern, but his lips smiled.

"I will not go down until they need me," he assured her.

She saw that her pleading would avail little when that time came. Her cheeks grew hot and her lips drew together in swift resolution.

"I go to my room," she said.

"Good," answered her father.

Straight to her own room in the tower she went, straight to a great oaken chest, bound with iron and inlaid with arabesques

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of ivory. Throwing it open, she took from it a beautifully made Saracen corselet, a Moorish helmet with mask and neck-curtains of finest steel mesh, and a man's leather hose. These were the spoils of her first adventure, taken from a too-violent suitor whose treason she had discovered, and whom she had snared and drowned in the brook-bed where he hunted her. She took out also a bow and a quiver full of arrows. These were a present from her father, and she had used them in many a chase in the forests about Rocca Forte.

Hastily stripping off her gown, she put on hose and armor, slung the quiver across one shoulder, and, bow in hand, passed into the corridor and out through a narrow passage into a gallery. This gallery ran on the level of the second story of the keep 'round all four sides of the great hall. Its outer side was protected by a thick stone screen, pierced with rich Saracenic carving, and as high as a tall man. Through the interstices of the design, men might shoot down upon any who won their way into the hall; but now the archers were all away with Jaufré.

It was a strange and terrible scene which opened before her. Below, lit by the inadequate torchlight, perhaps thirty men were swarming about the stair leading up into the keep. At the foot of the stair lay a heap of dead, and others writhed in pain between it and the floor just below her. Spears and swords flashed about the steps; but she could see little of the brave handful that defended.

Now and again there would come the gleam of steel, a man would cry out in mortal pain, and the mass about the stair would press back in sudden fear. Then she could make out the gleaming armor and the bright shields of her father's warriors. Once she had time to count them before the foe sprang in again. They were but four; but they held their own!

Fulvia fitted an arrow to the string, and peered through the interstices in the stone, looking for Alberic. But he was hidden in the mass of his own men: occasionally she glimpsed him for an instant, but always he was obscured again by the shifting press before she could draw and loose. So, as the attackers closed again, she picked out a tall Apulian, whose head towered above the crests of his fellows. Her bow-string twanged, and the Apulian fell forward, soundless, in the press. Again she shot, and again; each time a man fell.

Her fourth shot struck a Greek spearman between the shoulders. As the stricken man swayed, he uttered a fearful cry. Those about him heard, looked, and saw the arrow sticking out from his back. Cries of terror arose; the assailants bunched together in incipient panic; but Alberic, turning, looked fearlessly up toward that part of the balcony whence he knew the shot came. He made a perfect mark, and Fulvia loosed; but the shaft went high, struck the crest of his helmet, and glanced off harmlessly.

"Cowards!" he cried to his men. "It is but one! Charge home, and make quick work of it!"

Fearing their master more than a single archer, they surged once more toward the stair. Fulvia shot among them with impunity, for behind the fretted stone-work they could neither make her out clearly nor injure her. She was too high to be reached with a spear; and Alberic, intent on a treacherous and easy victory, had had no reason to bring bowmen with him. Nor, if he had, could any archers on the floor have hoped to strike her down from her post of perfect vantage.

This time the attack was fiercer, more sustained. The exhausted defenders hewed grimly, holding their shields up with arms that dragged. Bitterly they contested the stair, making every stroke tell. They used the edge entirely now, for to thrust would have cumbered their points long enough for the foe to break their line. They fought doggedly, dripping with sweat, sticky with their own and hostile blood.

AFTER a brief pause for breath after his muscle-racking descent, Ibn Hawwas kicked off his shoes, let go the end of the line, and struck out for the other side of the harbor-mouth. With smooth, measured strokes, he swam through the slightly phosphorescent water toward the point opposite. It was not far; but Hawwas was an old man and already very tired. Not half-way over, his strength began to fail. With the physician's instinct he repressed his fear, and forced himself to swim carefully and not too fast. He must not fail; his master, whom he loved, and Fulvia, who was very dear to him, relied upon him for their lives.

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Strength ebbed with every stroke. His limbs dragged; he felt unutterably sleepy. It would be so easy to give up struggling, and sink into the warm depths. But he would strive on! He set his teeth, and struck out bravely. He swallowed a mouthful of water, plunged about in panic, and touched something solid and hard with his right hand. Instinctively he clutched it.

It was the chain—the great iron chain which, stretching from the base of the castle to the opposite headland, barred the harbor at night to hostile galleys. From the point where he had grasped it, it rose by slight degrees toward shore, where it was fastened far above the reach of a man. In mid-channel it spanned too deep for his feet to touch, so he knew that he was just past the middle of the channel. He was safe now; he had but to rest till his strength returned, pull himself along the chain to the land, then run as fast as his old legs would carry him to the village of the Saracen fishermen in the cove, a little way inside the harbor-mouth.

Half an hour afterward, wet and staggering, Hawwas dropped upon the threshhold of the nearest hut. He gasped his story; the mustachioed fisherman spoke to his three sons, and away they sped through the town, shouting the news to their countrymen. Lights flashed in every hut; the sinewy Moors seized knives, scimitars, fishing spears, bows and barbed arrows. The chief of the village, a gray-haired veteran of two wars, assembled them at the water's edge; and enjoining silence, bade his bearded sea-warriors push out their boats.

THE four fought on. Scarce two dozen men still opposed them; but the mercenaries were fighting with the fury of a threefold fear. They feared the bloodthirsty swords before them; they feared the arrows that came stealthily from behind; they would have broken and fled, but that they feared Alberic more than swords and arrows. And ever he drove them on, threatening death by torture to him that slackened in his effort.

Twice Fulvia's arrows had grazed the Lombard; but he fought always in the van, with his men between him and her shafts. Strong as a bull, he was a fair match for any of the Normans, and would have held his own with any one of them. But the four fought like some deadly engine, never breaking formation, never giving an opening, each strengthening and reenforcing the others.

But suddenly one of the four slipped in a pool of blood from the dying Godefroi, higher up the stair. Before he could recover, Alberic darted forward and cut him down. The Norman line was broken; the three remaining men-at-arms were too few to hold the full width of the stair.

"Now!" shouted Alberic. "At them!"

The assailants swept up the first two steps unresisted. Then, while the heroic three strove valiantly to block them, a voice thundered above the tumult:

"*Bras-de-Fer!* Arm of Iron!"

Plunging down two steps at a time, his great two-edged sword poised above his head, the huge figure of Arnulfo broke through the gap. Scorning defense, he hurled himself full at the brown of his enemies: Alberic was flung flat at the first sweep, and crawled away behind his men. He knew the ferocity with which Arnulfo fought, and thought to avoid meeting him until he could recover his own breath and strength.

The joyous battle-lust drove the fever from Arnulfo's bones. His ancient might flowed back into his veins; his gigantic frame and corded arms drove his blade home with fearful power. Before its sweep the mercenaries fell as the picked cavalry of Constantinople had once fallen before it. Every flash of the great sword was followed by the crunch of steel on bone, by a cry of mortal pain, or a silent fall. The assailants pressed back in fright.

Then, reechoing the old warrior's battle-cry, the three Norman men-at-arms charged those who had charged them so short a space before. Ranging themselves beside their lord, they fought in an exultant rage, pressing back their enemies in spite of the shouted threats of the Lombard. Back into the middle of the hall the battle reeled, till Fulvia was obliged to cease shooting for fear of striking her own. The terrible arm and deadly sword of Arnulfo raged savagely on.

But Alberic would not give over. Beside himself with rage and despair, he flung himself between his cowed followers and the avenging swords.

"Turn, you whipped dogs!" he roared.

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"I will beat down the old man; do ye smother the rest!"

He fell upon Arnulfo with flailing sword, throwing into his blows all his brute strength, all the ferocity of his wild nature. The old count, the unnatural flare of force ebbing before the exhaustion of his sickness, was almost flung off his feet. Stroke upon stroke Alberic rained upon his shield, till Arnulfo was driven back full five paces.

The assassins saw, took heart again, and charged like a pack of wolves. The advantage of position lost, the three men-at-arms were surrounded, hacked at from all sides. Sure of death now, they fought like demons, bent upon taking as many of their foes to destruction with them as they could.

Furious at the powerlessness of his fever-ridden limbs, Arnulfo concentrated all his being into a passionate effort to resist. Slowly his brain cleared; the will which had hewn out victory from defeat so many times before drove the flagging energy back into his body. At last he stood firm; his blows no longer rebounded harmlessly from shield and helmet, but once more cut through his enemy's mail. About the two champions the fight swirled fiercely, till weight and numbers drove the three Normans to the further wall, leaving both leaders at death-grips in the center of the hall.

THE unscalable castle rock behind and on their left, the Moslem fishermen brought their boats ashore near where the hill swept down to the level ground below the ramp, whose wall towered gray against the blackness before them. Silent as cats, hidden by the night—for the torches were now burned out—from the eyes of the handful Alberic had left to watch at the blockhouse, the first boat's crew carried a long lateen yard to the side of the second level of the ramp, planted it like a ladder, and swarmed up one by one.

Their bare toes found footholds in the rock where only an Arab could cling; their weapons were clutched between their teeth, leaving their hands free to pull themselves up the yard. The first up flung down ropes, made fast with grapnels hooked over the stone parapet. Up these ropes came the second and third boats' crews, bracing their feet against the face of the wall, till three score sinewy figures were gathered together. Noiselessly they padded down toward the blockhouse, knives and scimitars ready. A silent rush, and they flung themselves through the inner gate.

The surprised mercenaries inside made little or no defense: before they dreamed of an enemy, their lives went out in a sudden flash of steel. Throwing open the blockhouse gate for their comrades outside to enter, the Saracens surged on up the ramp, over the outer drawbridge, across the bailey, over the inner drawbridge and into the great hall.

MORE slowly now, for they were near exhaustion, the two champions feinted and struck. Their weapons were red, their mailed arms were dripping. Half-blinded with fever and weariness, Arnulfo saw his foe stagger, and thrust the boss of his shield full into Alberic's face. The Lombard reeled; Arnulfo's blade circled about his head, and sank deep through the steel helmet into the traitor's brain.

As his enemy fell dead, Arnulfo swayed forward, clutched at a column, and held himself upright. He thrust a hand to his eyes, to clear away the gathering darkness, and looked about him.

Only two of his men were left alive. These, battling manfully against overwhelming odds, had their backs to the wall. An arrow sung through the air, and struck down a Calabrian in the act of raising his sword. Arnulfo looked up to the balcony, and caught a glimpse of tawny hair and white face through the carved stonework.

"*Dieu merci*, Fulvia!" the old Norman cried; and echoing his shout, a many-throated roar burst from the hall gate.

"*Allah Allahu il Allah!* Arnulfo!"

Through the entrance poured an eager throng of Saracens, their crooked blades flashing in the torchlight. With the swiftness of pouncing hawks, they flung themselves upon the remnants of Alberic's little band. The Arab's love of slaughter boiling in their veins, they took no quarter; nor was there any escape for the doomed men. Some of the assassins, forced in their turn to the wall, fought like cornered rats; others were cut down as they fled; but more than half, smitten with panic terror at the suddenness of the attack, flung down their arms, dropped to their knees, and whined for mercy.

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But the Moslems knew not the God in whose name they pleaded, and the red blades rose and fell till Arnulfo, shivering and chattering in a new access of ague, cried to the killers to cease. As he shouted the command, the sword slipped from his hand and he fell forward dizzily.

As the Moslems swept the shattered foe before them, Fulvia ran swiftly along the gallery to the keep, down the stairs, and into the wrecked hall. A Saracen raised his scimitar to strike at her; but she flung back her helmet, and he recognized her. Between the struggling groups she darted, straight for the column where her father leaned; and just as he fell, she gathered him in her arms. Ibn Hawwas reached his master as she caught him up; at a word from the old physician, two sturdy fishermen bore the count up to his chamber and laid him on the bed, where Fulvia undid the fastenings of his armor.

Hawwas drew a tall vial of Egyptian glass from a cabinet on the wall. Raising it to the light, he nodded and grumbled—

"The fever will gnaw him a fortnight longer for this night's work."

Arnulfo opened his eyes, and the chill seized him with fresh violence. While Fulvia held him, Hawwas forced the vile-tasting medicine between his lips. His strength returning, Arnulfo sat up, spat and cursed.

The Saracen chief thrust his gray beard between the curtains.

"Sheik Arnulfo," he asked, "what shall we do with the prisoners?"

Arnulfo looked at him, his mouth still twisted with the nauseating potion.

"Hang them!" he barked.

THE SIREN SEA

by RICHARD BUTLER GLAENZER

MY MIND'S made up; I'll settle down
When my ship comes home at last,
Buy me a house in a garden-town
With a shady old elm for mast.
I'll settle down when my ship comes home—
No, you will sail away
Through fields of blue with flowers of foam,
Shaded by leaves of spray.

I tell you, I'm going to quit for good
At the end of a year's command.
I know what's what and it's understood
By the seal of my heart and hand.
I'll quit for good when my ship comes home
And marry— *So you say;*
But a man like you is bound to roam
While there's an anchor to weigh.

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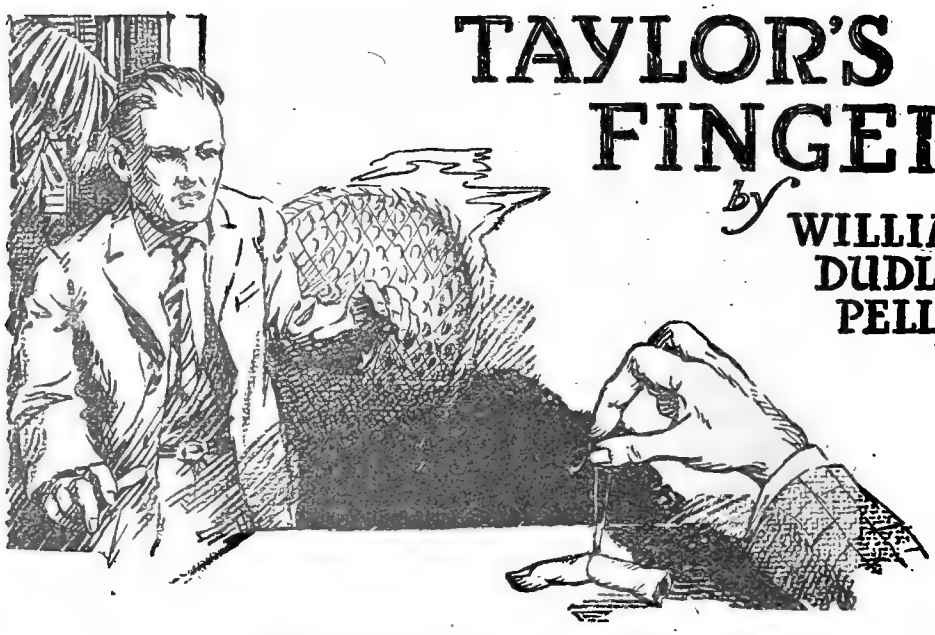

TAYLOR'S FINGER

by WILLIAM DUDLEY PELLEY

Author of "A Matter of Altruism," "The Saddle," etc.

I WALKED on the edge of the Southern Sea along the broad stretch of alluvial coast. Above me were paragraphed the prinkling points of the Southern Cross. Orange and ceiba trees hung motionless in the hush of a wonderful evening. If a light breeze occasionally blew in toward the land, it lifted the limber fronds of the palms only for a moment. Then they sank back quickly into silhouette.

All I could think of was the features of a dead man. The recollection would not go away. Willard, consul in Titullic, had advised me to take a stiff drink and go to bed. But the silent apartment Willard had assigned me held worse terrors than this walking alone by the sea.

I returned finally to the screened veranda where the orange tip of Willard's cigar punctuated the velvet purple. I saw the tip of light flourish. He took it from his mouth and chuckled.

"Stop being a fool, young man," he said. "There will be dead people until the end of time. And a certain percentage of them go by violence."

"Only I don't want to see them before they are buried."

"What of it? It was just the one glance that you had. And you did not murder him. Tomorrow you will remember the sight less vividly. Within a week you will have to strive to recall it. In a month you will have forgotten it altogether."

"I hope so," I replied. "But nothing can be more ghastly than a face cut up in the way of that black man's."

"Black man?" inquired Willard. Then he laughed. "You should have been in my place in the episode of Taylor's Finger."

"Taylor's Finger?" I exclaimed. "What about Taylor's Finger. Tell me the story. Tell me something so long as you talk and distract me from my memory of the horrible face."

II

"PARTNIPP came to Titullic on one of the United Fruit steamers in the same way as yourself. But there was this difference in Partnipp. He did not come on Government business. He came because he was fleeing from some one or something—trying to forget.

"I saw it the moment I looked in his eyes. I did not ask him at once. It was none of my business. I have seen many people come down here from the States trying to forget—or until others have forgotten. So I waited for Partnipp to tell me about it.

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The soft, mysterious nights and the weird sounds from back in the shadowed land would do for him what they had done for others.

"He was a tall, handsome chap with a strong undershot jaw, a splash of pure white in his air, and the eyes of a man who is hunted and haunted.

"He imagined he had explained himself satisfactorily by declaring that his doctor had told him to rest for a year and he had chosen South America as a place for vacation. But there was no need for Partnipp to rest—that is, on account of his health. He was as strong and lithe as a Marathon contestant. He stayed around here three months. I was glad to have him. He was interesting.

"During the first month he wrote a letter. It went back to the States on the return boat. He seemed relieved somewhat when he had it completed. It went in with my reports for mailing. So I saw the address on the envelop. It was directed to a married woman up in Massachusetts.

"We have one boat a month down here. The time passes heavily between. There is the society of the folks in the little wooden hotel over on the edge of the banana grove, facing the sea. There is the German doctor, one Italian, two French merchants and three or four Americans down here for gold, rubber, mahogany, legal freedom. But outside of the card games and the booze, life is dreamy and uneventful.

"Partnipp wandered about aimlessly. The German doctor he couldn't understand. The Italian and French merchants discussed only things which did not interest him. The three or four Americans confided to me that they did not like his eyes. So they avoided his company. He spent most of his time with me. His eyes didn't bother. He was interesting. He told me many things about knitting-machines.

"By the sixth week I had learned that he had been a partner in a knitting-mill in New England. One night during the muggy heat I told him I would sell my job to see coming down the horizon a rollicking, booming old United States thunder-shower —the kind that takes the monotony from the air, freshens up the land, leaves the robins singing in a damp and dripping sunset of molten gold.

"My declaration made Partnipp draw in his breath sharply. He glanced nervously about the apartment. His face for an instant was worse than yours when you came to me this afternoon with the account of your ghastly find in the banana grove.

" 'What's the matter, son,' said I. For I knew then that a thunderstorm had something to do with Partnipp's predicament.

" 'Don't ask me that,' he replied. 'It's really no one's affair but my own.'

"I did not press him. On the down-boat three weeks later came a small parcel. It laid among the mail for an hour before he appeared. The card of the sender written in the upper left-hand corner showed that it came from the same woman to whom he had addressed the letter several weeks before.

"When he finally put in his appearance I knew he was not expecting the box because he fingered it perplexedly before opening. I was near him when he cut the tough, red string, broke the sealing-wax and peeled off the brown-paper covering. Inside was a small white box, an inch square and about four inches long. It was such a box as a jeweler might use to mail a penknife.

"Partnipp lifted the cover with puzzled face. He pulled out the swab of pink cotton wadding. Then he gave an exclamation of horror and disgust. He dropped box and contents.

"The object which had come from the States fell to my table. For an instant I did not recognize it. A piece of silk cord about eighteen inches long was fastened in the middle of the thing, to hang it up. I reached for the free end and lifted it. It swung back and forth freely a few inches above the table-top.

"It was the forefinger of a man's right hand!

"For several seconds Partnipp gazed upon it with the horror and haunted look increasing in his eyes. Then he sank into one of my big reed chairs and buried his face in his hands.

" 'Don't you think,' said I, 'that it's about time I was taken into your confidence about this whole business?'

" 'No,' said he. 'Forgive me if I'm inhuman. But some day you'll know. Even if that day's very far away, it'll be time enough, Willard.'

"Then he left the finger with me. After a while he arose and passed out.

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"I LIFTED the finger again. It wasn't the prettiest finger in the world, even though it was severed from the hand from which it originally came. It was discolored a filthy yellow like the finger of a cigaretist. The nail was seamed and sickly.

"And there was this queer thing about it; left to hang freely from the silken strand, both strand and finger spun around for a moment and then pointed at the door through which Partnipp had disappeared.

"At first I thought it a twist of the thread. But it was not a twist of the thread. The thread hung in true plumb and I rested my hand on the back of a chair to be certain no unconscious motion was imparted to it. The finger trembled, swung, and pointed through the door in the direction in which Partnipp had fled!

"I deliberately turned it toward me. The moment I drew my hand away, back went the finger in the direction of the door.

"I said to myself, 'This is interesting but blooming uncanny. I've got to find Partnipp and solve this mystery.'

"So I went to find him. He was not at the hotel. Pedito, the Castilian-mannered barkeep, declared Partnipp had appeared once under the nebulous glow of the kerosene lamps with a sickly white face—then vanished into the shadow. I took one or two turns through the dark, grass-grown streets. But I did not meet Partnipp nor any one who had seen him. I decided he was temporarily upset, as you have been this evening, and gone off by himself to the sea. Morning would be ample time.

"I returned to the consulate. The haunted finger was lying as I had dropped it on the table. I tied it to the brass-work beneath the center lamp. It hung there, twisting and swaying until morning.

"On the morrow I went forth in search of Walter. Through the insignificant town in this insignificant republic by the side of this second-rate sea, I searched. And I found him at last in one of the rum-dens they have the gall to call a hotel down here—the one kept by old Madama Onetiz—where customers drank in the lowest of spirits and fearsomely as in the shadow of death which they were, to drink there at all.

"I got him back to the consulate and waited until he had sobered.

" 'Willard, I'm going to get out of this place,' said he.

" 'Why?'

" 'It's an omen.'

" 'What's an omen?'

" 'The finger,' he said.

" 'What's at the bottom of all this, anyhow?' I asked him.

" 'Willard,' said he to me, sitting on the edge of my cot and looking grimly at his hands, 'isn't there a certain man around these parts that comes down here to the town occasionally with a string of mules and an *arriero* to help him—a chap that's making big money by carrying on some kind of barter with the people back in the mountains?'

" 'You mean Jerry Parker?' says I. 'Yes. He loads the mules with a varied assortment of hardware and cutlery. These articles he trades with the interior Indians for the gold-dust they have washed from the Andean streams and stored in bags and quills against his coming. Sure! It's a profitable occupation, although a risky one. I understand Jerry's almost got enough dust now to get the coffee plantation he's been wanting.'

" 'Willard,' says he, 'I'm going to fit myself out and start doing the same.'

"Well, I spent half the day arguing how many kinds of a blank fool he was. I dwelt on the precipices and the fever. I told him horrible yarns of what occurred to those who found disfavor among the interior Indians. It did no good. I saw that it wasn't a lust for barter he wanted satiated. It was the desire to get away from his fellows—just as far into the wild country as he knew how and lose himself.

"There was no dissuading him. He got a couple of saddle-mules and four pack-mules. I went and chewed garbled Spanish all one afternoon with old Perallo, the rich native merchant, for a mess of truck that, carted up into the heights, would make Partnipp rich. Or he thought it was going to make him rich. Personally I knew it was suicide. He would never come out alive. This is not a white man's country especially for one so inexperienced in the ways of the climate and the Indians as Partnipp.

"When the bells of the head mule jingled and the pack-train filed after the leading mule, I waved him good-by with many misgivings. He was interesting. I had learned a lot from him about knitting-machinery. He wound through the streets of thatched

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huts and plunged into the damp coolness of banana groves. That was the last I saw of him. That is, for a year.

"When I returned from the consulate I chanced to glance at my hanging-lamp. The mysterious finger was missing.

"Again I returned to the eating of the lotus and awaited the arrival of some new personage who wore shoes. I learned to figure the seasons principally by my reports —so many thousand bunches of bananas; so many thousand oranges and coconuts; so many ounces of gold-dust; so many pounds of rubber, cotton, indigo, sarsaparilla.

III

"IT MIGHT have been one year afterward—or ten—we never have calendar salesmen down here—when I looked out into the languid bay one afternoon and saw a little tramp steamer out there against the blue. The little steamer stopped to tread water. The captain's dory put in for the shore. He evidently wished to feel the pulse of the coconut market.

"In his boat he brought a stranger whose suit-case indicated that he contemplated calling these parts home for quite a spell. I saw him within a few moments after he landed. He was a stout, stocky, little chap, but his face was as creased with dissipation as a celebrated actor's. His brown hair was wound in curls all over his head. His black, rat-like eyes were cruelly cunning. He secured quarters at the little wooden-fronted hotel and when he began to look about him he came over to me.

" 'I'll be frank with you,' said he. 'I'm down here to find a chap named Partnipp. I've got positive information he's been here.'

" 'Yes, he's been here,' said I. 'It was a long time ago. He started up into the mountains and never returned. It may have been for many reasons. He may have run out of quinine, equilibrium or diplomacy,' said I.

" 'I shall stay around this place for a spell,' said he. 'He may return.'

" 'And if he does?' said I.

" 'I have an account to settle with him,' replied the repulsive little chap.

" 'What's your name?' I asked him.

" 'Taylor,' he replied.

"I had been looking the stranger over keenly. He sat in the same chair which you are occupying now. Suddenly he curled his face down into the cup of his hands to light a cigaret. In that moment I noted that the trigger-finger of the right hand was missing."

"I said to him: 'Partnipp put in at this South American Sleepydelphia and mystified me by a finger without a man. Now you put in and mystify me by a man without a finger. What's the answer to all this, anyhow?

" 'A finger! So—he got it!'

" 'Yes, a girl sent it to him; that much I know. It had a bearing on his sudden exodus into the antediluvian elevations with barter as an excuse.'

" 'Yes,' said he, 'the girl is my wife, or was. I never cared a —— about her. She was always stuck on him, anyhow. Where's my finger now?'

" 'I believe he took it with him,' said I.

" 'I'll wait around here,' he replied with a sneer that made him repulsive. 'It's sleepy and restful. A chap could get a jag on without being run in or having his folks raise a row. And when Partnipp comes back, he's going to pay in full for the way that woman's treated me. My folks have kicked me out, but I know one man that's going to pay or I'm going to raise hell with him.'

"Taylor took his place among the other odd fish cast up by the Caribbean. He acquired an extreme fondness for *vino blanco* and gained the reputation of being able to hold more of it than any other man in town. He was forever drinking and playing cards half the day and night with the *comandante*, the collector of customs, the *Jefe Politico* and other gay dogs among the native officials. In short, in the time Taylor stayed with us he utilized each golden hour to acquire as much speed as possible in going to the devil.

"And he went to the devil. He never bothered me. When he ran out of money he made love to old Madama's daughter. That kept him in the *blanco* for another three months. But he sank lower and lower until even Dona Patta wouldn't allow him to touch her, and that was very low indeed. I tried to straighten him out just once. I found he had contracted a bad disease. I knew he would never return to the States. The lotus he had eaten had done for him.

"Finally one evening the *comandante* sent for me to inform me that my esteemed fellow-countryman was in jail, beseeching

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to see me. I went to the place. I passed the melancholy procession of sad-faced women bearing plantains, cassaba, bread and fruit to some wretch behind those bars to whom she still clung and furnished the means of life. Morning and evening they were permitted to come—for the republic furnished her compulsory guests no food. And Taylor had none among them to bring him food.

"I recoiled at the wreck before me. He was hideous in his filth, his rags, his dissipation, his starvation. He lay on some dried grass in a corner. He had been charged with attempting to murder an official and at the time had not the incentive to even send for me to assist him.

"When he saw me he began to whimper and weep.

" 'Willard,' he blubbered, 'you're a man from God's country. You're white like I am. Help me, Willard. I'm down and out.'

" 'You do look rather incapacitated,' I told him.

" 'I never had a square deal,' he declared bitterly. 'My father always thought more of my brothers than of me. Because I got sick now and then, he finally turned me out.'

" 'Because you got drunk, you mean,' said I.

" 'Call it that if you want to, Willard. I can't help it now. I'm down and out. My wife never cared anything for me. I always seemed to have hard luck in everything I undertook. And look at me now! Look at me, Willard!'

" 'I see you,' said I. 'You're a mess.'

" 'Willard,' said he, 'would you—would you help me—to get back to the States?'

" 'What do you want to get back to the States for?'

" 'Well, I've got a wife up there, and if —if she saw me in this condition—she might help me.'

" 'You low-down, good-for-nothing bum!' I declared. 'You mean to go back after what you've been down here and make some woman's life miserable, I take it!'

" 'No! I won't make her life miserable. If she'll only help me get a fresh start, I'll try to make good. I swear it.'

" 'I don't believe it,' I declared. 'But after all, it's none of my affair. Yes, I'll help you to go back. But you better come up to the consulate and stay there about ten years getting back what you've lost among the associations you've had. If you ever went back ravaged as you are now you'd scare all your folks to death.'

" 'When does the next boat come up the coast on its way home to the States?' he wanted to know.

" 'In about twenty days,' I told him.

"After all, he was a man 'from back in God's country.' It's strange how men who have so little in common will be drawn together in such a place as this simply because their flesh is white.'

" 'Can you get me out of this fix?' he asked.

" 'I'll try,' said I. 'Come on. Pull yourself together. There's one chance in a million that you can get yourself in shape to go back on the up-boat. We'll see, anyhow.'

"I fixed things with the native *comandante* and after a trying and disgusting time, and much to the amusement of the natives, I got him up to the consulate. I bathed him and put him in decent clothes. I did all the tonsorial work on him that my nerves would permit and left him sleeping heavily on a bed I didn't care much about, with the first decent meal in his stomach that had found its way there in weeks.

"Just before going to sleep he cried—

" 'Don't let the nigger get me, will you?'

"I demanded to know what he meant. I wheedled it out of him that he had been put in the local jail through some brawl with a young native over the girl, Dona. And native vengeance was due to be meted out. I promised that he should have what protection the Stars and Stripes could give him and then left him. He gave every indication of being ready to sleep forty years in the matter of recuperation.

IV

"HE WAS asleep in my back chamber when Walter Partnipp returned. For Walter Partnipp did return. He was thin and impoverished from the hardships he had undergone. He was tanned the color of mahogany.

" 'Willard,' he declared after the impetus of our greeting, 'I'm a wealthy man.'

" 'Glad to hear it,' said I as diplomatically as I could, thinking the fever was still in him.

" 'And do you know what has made me successful?'

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"'You probably ran into a bunch of Injuns with the trinklets who'd never seen a white face before.'

"'No,' he replied. 'I'm rich because of that.'

"Saying which he felt in his loose shirt and drew from it the oblong box I had seen before. He ripped off the cover and pulled out the gruesome finger. I recoiled from it as before. It was tied by a new thread, but it still twirled about and pointed toward the door when it was hoisted in mid-air.

"'It's nothing to be afraid of,' he assured me. 'I got over my repulsion months ago.'

"He hoisted it by the string. It twirled 'round and 'round and finally pointed toward the door.

"'It did the same thing when I raised it the first night,' I told him.

"'Sure,' said he. 'That's because the door lies to the south. It points toward the southern magnetic pole.'

"'What's the southern magnetic pole got to do with it. You talk as if it was a compass needle.'

"'It acts the same way.'

"'I don't understand. What kind of balderdash are you trying to put over on me?' I wanted to know.

"'No balderdash, Willard. I've got a strange freak thing here. I didn't understand its actions for months. Then I discovered its properties quite by accident. I was in a cave up in the mountains. I was toying with it when it commenced to act strangely. It had always pointed toward the south. Now it persisted in whirling around to the northeast. I don't understand why I investigated; how the idea came to me.

"'But I arose and discovered that the northeast wall of the cave was brilliant with a vein of copper. Man, I've been all over this blooming country since I saw you last. I've located enough ore with this ghastly thing to utilize all the loose capital in Wall Street—and incidentally make me richer than Rockefeller.'

"'With the finger?'

"'With the finger. It's—the secret of my being down here.'

"'I think,' said I, 'that it's about time you took me into your confidence. What's all this 'to do' about anyhow, Walter?'

"He mused for a time and then said:

"'Perhaps you're right. It is inhuman to shove a mystery like this in front of a man and then go off without an inkling of explanation.'

"'Go off?' said I. 'Where are you going?'

"'I'm going back to the States.'

"'I naturally supposed,' said I, 'from your actions that the United States was shut to you for some—some crime or other. Has it been outlawed in the meantime? How comes it you can think of going back?'

"'I'm going back,' said he in a hard voice, 'because it's the white thing to do. I've fought and fought with myself in all the months I've been away from you, Willard. I've made a losing battle against conscience. Now that I have the prospects of cleaning up—thanks to this funny finger—I'm going back to God's country and fight the stigma and the shadow that hangs over my life. If I'm cleared—then I'm going to develop the mining opportunities I've discovered. If I'm not cleared—do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to see that what I've discovered goes to the family of the man I *—murdered.*"

"'So,' said I, 'it is murder. Tell me about it, Partnipp. Make a clean story of it. It—it won't go any further.'

"The strong, manly fellow decided the time had arrived when he might make a clean breast of everything. There was nothing to conceal now that he had made up his mind to return and face whatever crisis might be waiting for him at home.

"'Willard,' said he, 'up in New England I was junior partner in a company that made knitting-machines. I was also in love with a girl. There was a chap named Taylor that was also in love with her. He had discovered something criminal in the career of the girl's father, who was an officer in the local bank. The skunk used it to blackmail the old man and compel the girl to marry him.'

"'And he succeeded in getting her?'

"'Yes, she was a good girl. For the sake of the family name, she sacrificed her happiness—and mine. But that wasn't all. Taylor didn't stop there. With the knowledge that he had, he blackmailed the old man still further. He made the girl's father hand over five thousand dollars from somewhere, and with it he tried to buy an interest in our company. He said he wanted to get into a legitimate business.

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" 'I had no use for him—naturally. I wouldn't consent. He came to see me about it one afternoon in the factory. A thunderstorm had been brewing all the afternoon. Now it was crackling and roaring about the heavens as we discussed the matter and he told me that if I wouldn't consent, he would tell what he knew about the old man, relying on my love and regard for the girl to save her father and her name from disgrace.'

" 'The dirty scoundrel!' I exclaimed.

" 'Yes,' said Partnipp. "Well, we had a quarrel. It was pulled off in a deserted part of the factory where I was testing some new patents. I had not pulled the power off a machine I was working upon when he entered. One particular machine was smashing away when I finally lost control of my temper and when he let out a particularly mean and contemptible insinuation I shot out my fist and struck him a damaging blow on the forehead.'

" 'And killed him?'

" 'I saw him reel backward. Instantly I gave a cry of horror. Because to save himself from falling he put out his right hand and clutched at the gnashing machine that had the power on it. The hand went squarely beneath the shuttling knives. He gave a hoarse cry of agony and pulled it away. One finger was severed. The rest of the hand was badly mangled.'

" 'But that didn't kill him.'

" 'BEFORE I could go to his assistance, repentant for what I had been the cause of doing, there came a quick, portentous lull in the hum of the electric motor. There was one titanic pause. Then right over our heads about a million pounds of dynamite exploded. I saw a ball of green fire. Taylor's face seemed to turn the same color. He dropped where he stood. An ominous quiet permeated the factory. Then the motor started up again.

" 'I was stunned myself from the shock of the lightning. The bolt, however, one of those freaks of lightning, after killing Taylor, followed the steam pipes and shot down into the ground. There was no fire; almost no evidence that it had ever been there. But before me was Taylor's prostrate body with the mangled hand and the blue-black bruise on the temple where I had struck him. Dazed as I was from the electric shock and the phenomenal turn of events, I was not too muddled to realize that there was nothing to prove that it had been the lightning which had killed him and not my blow.

" 'Maybe an autopsy might show something. Then again, it might not. Anyhow, I couldn't disprove the blow. The circumstantial evidence was all against me. The body was hardly burned at all, but that Taylor was dead I was sure, because I placed my hand over his naked heart and made certain there was no motion.

" 'Then I did a foolish thing, perhaps. Fear of the consequences got the better of me. I had hardly any money to conduct a suitable defense for myself; I was in for it. Fear and conscience made a coward of me. I fled the town, almost as I was—with hardly any money and only one insane idea—to get away from the crime. I sold a diamond ring I happened to have on my hand for enough to get a change of clothes and carry me in the following night to New York, where I got aboard the little fruit steamer tied up in the North River. It sailed the next day and brought me down here. The rest—you know.'

" 'And you were real sure that Taylor was dead?'

" 'After I got down here I wrote my old girl a letter. You know my answer. All I got was this finger—Taylor's finger—which must have been found after the crime and come into her possession. I supposed, of course, that being unable to write she took that method of reminding me of what I was suspected.'

" 'But what makes the finger act that way?'

" 'That's the funny part, Willard,' said he. 'In some freak way one of the slender needle blades of the knitting-machine was driven through it lengthwise. As near as I've been able to dope out, the shaft of steel imbedded in the finger was magnetized by the bolt of lightning.'

" 'That's a pretty tall circumstance to ask a normal man to believe."

" 'I admit it,' said he. 'I'm simply telling you what happened, however. That shaft of high-quality steel went through Taylor's finger between the flesh and the bone and there it lay imbedded out of sight. The finger dried and mummified. Why any one should have saved it or come to hang it up by a string, is something I've

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racked my head for all these months, to dope out. That I don't know.'

"I thought of Taylor in the next room; of the ghastly joke he had played on the man who had suffered a ruined life because of him; of the feelings of the girl that the despicable cur had abused even in the sending of the mutilated thing to him as soon as he found that she knew where he was. But Taylor's mission in South America I could hardly make out.

"To the present I don't know just what he hoped to accomplish, unless it was to threaten him still further with the knowledge he had of his father-in-law's guilt, or to frighten the distraught man by appearing to him and haunting him, or just cheap revenge for some kind of a fancied wrong. But I said nothing. Only—

" 'And so you're going back?'

" 'Yes, I've had enough of it. I'm going back and face the music. It's simply impossible for me to go through the rest of my life in this way—haunted by Taylor, the thought of what the girl I loved may have been going through since, by a thousand things which a criminal in a foreign land remembers. But I'm going back with some confidence: if I succeed in clearing myself and can develop what Taylor's finger has pointed out to me in these mountains—wealth untold—I'll be amply recompensed for what I've endured.'

"I pondered over this strange narrative; this freak situation. One man succeeds in ruining the life of another, taking away home, friends, business, love. Then to play a ghastly trick, the man sends his own finger to increase the ruined man's mental torture and instead, by a strange twirk of retribution, that finger points the way to wealth. Some circumstance! It was the strangest occurrence I had met with down here—amid a dozen years of strange occurrences.

" 'I suppose,' said I, 'that if Taylor had been taken off by the lightning as you say, and you can clear yourself, that you will marry the girl now—seeing that she is a widow—and willing?'

" 'Yes,' he cried eagerly, pathetically eagerly.

" 'On the other hand, if you didn't kill Taylor, the woman is still his wife and as far from you as ever. In going back, you are returning to the *status quo* of events before your flight down here.'

" 'Why do you talk like that? You speak as though I never killed Taylor in the first place. Have you heard anything —from the States while I've been up in the mountains?'

" 'Not a word,' I said as glibly as I could. 'I was merely supposing.' Then I said, not wishing to tell falsehoods, 'No, I haven't heard a word about Taylor's death from the States since you have been away from here.'

" 'When does the next boat leave?' he demanded.

" 'There's a party of Germans starting down the coast in the morning,' said I. 'They're going to San Antillo. A steamer is going to pick them up there. If you really want to go back to the States at once I'll go up to the hotel with you and make arrangements for you to accompany them.'

" 'Thanks,' said he.

" 'You—you better make your plans to stay up there at the hotel tonight also,' said I. 'There's a poor duffer in the back bedroom that I'm afraid has contracted a disease that might shut you in quarantine if you stayed here with me. Please don't say anything about it at the hotel and for heaven's sake don't mention the finger or what it's done for you, to the crowd up at the hotel.'

" 'Not on your life!' he declared warmly.

" 'Walter,' said I as he was leaving, 'do you really think that girl loves you—and you love her?'

" 'What do you mean?' he demanded in surprise.

" 'If you went back and found that Taylor was really dead and yet you were cleared of all blame in his demise, do you think your poor love affair would—would have a happy ending at last.'

" 'Why, of course I think so!' he declared. 'That's—one of the reasons I'm going back, Willard. I've thought it all over up in the mountains. If I can establish that I didn't kill Taylor—the girl will be mine, after all. It hit me with a jolt when I stopped to think of it. The bolt of lightning which made me a criminal at the same time freed her from the ignoble union. I'm game to take the chance, now that I've viewed the whole thing from perspective and got my nerve back, of clearing myself for the sake of getting the girl.'

" 'Well,' said I, 'good luck! I hope everything comes out right.'

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"'So do I,' he replied. 'And the luck I've had so far makes me believe that it will.'

"In the morning he went away with the Germans. I was sorry to bid him good-by. I liked him immensely. He told me many things about knitting-machines."

V

EVIDENTLY Willard's story was completed. He returned his dead cigar to his face and lighted it.

"And did you ever hear from him again?" I asked.

"Yes, he wrote me that he had returned and found that his exile had been for naught. The lightning had never killed Taylor. The woman would not marry him because Taylor was still alive, although he had deserted her some months before. Anyhow, he cleared his name of the crime, even if he didn't get the girl. Some of his men are running that mine sixty miles up in the mountains that you asked me about this noon."

"And Taylor got well and went back to torment him?"

Willard did not reply at once. So long afterward that I had almost forgotten my question, he said—

"I hope they will be happy."

"Hope who will be happy?"

"Walter and his wife."

"Then he did marry her—Taylor's wife?"

"No, but he will—as soon as he gets the documents I sent back on the up-boat this morning."

"What documents?"

"The proofs of Taylor's death. Maybe I did right. Maybe I did wrong. But the man was a physical and mental wreck anyhow."

"Who—Taylor?"

"Yes."

"Then you never helped him to get back to the United States!"

No reply to this.

"But what did become of Taylor?"

"The first time he fell from grace and went back to Dona, Dona's new man *got* him."

"Willard," said I, "on the level—did you have anything to do with—with Taylor going back to the brown girl, Dona?"

No reply to this question, either.

"How did Dona's new beau *get* him?" I asked.

"You ought to know," Willard replied. "That was Taylor that you found murdered out in the banana grove this afternoon."

A BRAND-NEW YANKEE DEMOCRACY

by R. P. THOMPSON

THE lad who used to travel on wheels,
Buttoned in fur to his chin,
Is treckin' along on blistered heels,
Eatin' his chow from a tin!

He bathes when he can and he shaves when he must
And he handles a man-sized tool.
The remarks he's made to his blunt-nosed spade
He'll never have learned in school!

He's lost the stoop and the motor droop,
And he's going it on his own,
With grit and vim—and the best of him
Trimmed down to brawn and bone.

For names don't count in the khaki ranks
And nobody reads "Who's Who."
They feature you there on the bill of fare
For the things that you really do!

The lad who used to travel on wheels
Pays his toll with the rest—in blood—
There's a brand-new Yankee democracy
Mixing out there in the mud!

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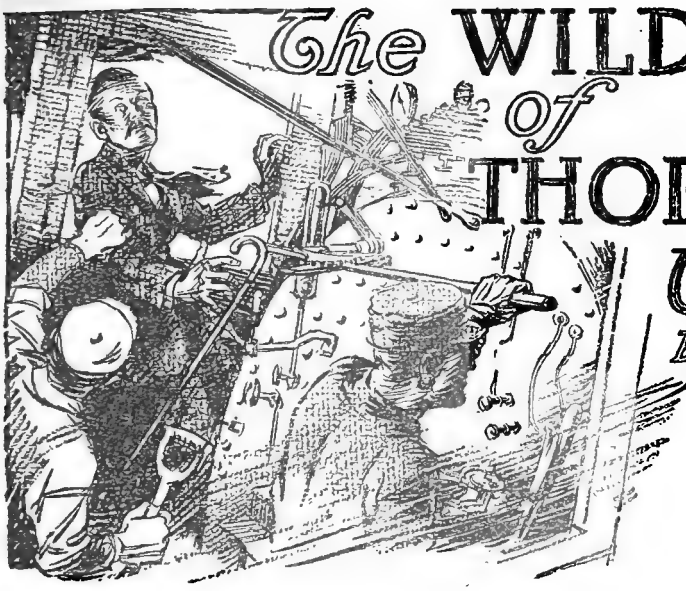

The WILD RIDE of THORNTON UPTON

by HERBERT SLOCOMBE

"IT ALL happened out on the Union Pacific, back in the early nineties," ruminated the old ex-engineer, drawing his wooden leg closer over his knee, observing the tightening knot of Summer boarders gathered about him.

"I was a travelin' engineer those days, and wasn't bothered with this stiff leg, at the time I'm tellin' of. That—" indicating the artificial member—"didn't come for more'n two years later."

"What's a traveling engineer?"

"Well, a travelin' engineer is to engineers what a head waiter is to ordinary waiters. My job was checkin' up the men with a view of improvin' the service. I kept a record of each crew's work, mileage and tonnage, besides knowin' exactly what each locomotive had cost to operate, and what the repairs had been down to the smallest bolt or nut. Besides, my records showed how many miles were made to a ton of coal, pint of oil, or pound of waste."

"But what I was goin' to tell you about was about the biggest thing I ever did in my whole career railroadin'—the very biggest! And what makes it sound more like a yarn is the remarkable circumstances surroundin' it all, from the very beginnin' clear through to the Denver Union Station."

The little group sat quietly while the old engine-man knocked the sizzling coal from the bottom of his pipe and deliberately proceeded to cram it hard full again. Then the old man began:

IT AIN'T that I claim any special self-exaltation out of it—not that—for I never put a hand to the throttle during the whole night's run. But runnin' ain't descriptive—don't convey the real idea how we were goin' that night! At times we were fairly skylutin' across the Nebraska plains, like a skyrocket, the hot cinders and smoke roarin' behind us that fiercely!

It was at the close of a hot sultry day out there in Omaha, and I had just reported in, when the telephone rang. It was the "Old Man's" voice on the wire askin' for me.

"Jim," said he, "we've got one of the biggest jobs on hand that we've ever had—not for its size—but for its audacity."

"What is it?" says I.

"We've got a mine operator here who wants a special run through to Denver to make the Denver & Rio Grande's 7:40 express for Pueblo in the morning," says he. "I've ordered a special to be made up. Kennedy will take her over the first division and we'll use picked crews all over the line, but we've got to have some one in charge."

"I'll be ready in two minutes," says I, anticipatin' his meaning.

"Good. She must be nearly made up. I'll be waitin'," says he, ringin' off.

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Crossin' over by the engine-house I found things in the lower yards in a big hubbub with Kennedy sittin' half out the cab window of a big compound, with two Pullmans coupled on, pullin' slowly up. He got my signal as I sprinted across the tracks and loped aboard.

"Let her go," said I, pullin' myself up the steps as he unlatched the lever and threw the throttle open, and we went singin' down the yard takin' switches and cross-overs on the double quick.

Less'n two minutes we rolled in under the big train-shed. Standin' half-way up at the right of the main, westbound track stood Tulford, the general traffic manager. He was a short, pudgy man, with snappin' black eyes, and a voice that mellow an' seductive that no matter whatever he asked, whether it seemed possible or not, you'd try and do it, that powerful was his personality. Standin' close behind him, alongside the chief dispatcher, was a big Englishman with stovepipe hat and a thick gnarly cane that he kept thumpin' on the platform as we drew up."

"This 's Mr. Upton of London," says Tulford. "He's got to reach Denver in the morning in time to connect with the Rio Grande's Pueblo express to take up a valuable option in that city which expires tomorrow at noon. And it's 7:30 now, Stevens," says he, all in the same breath, eying me. "Can you do it?"

"We're nearly three hours and a half behind No. 6!" I interjected, tryin' to show my surprise at his audacity. No. 6 was our fastest overnight train west that made that same connection.

"Yes, Jim," he says. "It's a very unusual proposition for us to entertain, I'll admit, but that's why I sent for you."

An' all the while his beamin' countenance was playin' directly on me. And I could feel his powerful will dominatin' mine.

"I'll try it, sir," I answered.

"Good! There's a big bonus for us if you succeed, Jim, and a double week's pay for each of the crews—understand? Double pay for them—and something bigger for you! All tracks will be clear—you'll have right of way over everything. Figure out a reduced runnin' schedule, shortenin' each division and drop it off at Columbus where you stop for water. Remember, we're all dependin' on you!"

The Pullman porter had put the big Englishman aboard and had tossed his stool into the vestibule as I moved forward to give Kennedy the high-sign, when I heard my name above the hiss of the exhaust, just as I grabbed the handrail.

"Jim, I know it's askin' a big pile of you, but it's not only a matter of personal pride, Jim, but there's ten thousand in it for the company if you succeed! That's why I sent for you."

His black eyes were jumping.

"It's found money if we can do it. And a record for the U. P., Jim. There's nothing on the rails but No. 6, and she's nearly two hundred miles ahead eatin' up the road at fifty-five to sixty miles! And you've got to reach Denver not later than fifteen minutes behind her!"

I nodded and could still feel the force of his compellin' gaze as I pulled up the high steps into the cab.

Kennedy let a full charge into the cylinders to try her movement, which caused the big seven-foot drivers to spin on the iron, sendin' a shower of sparks against the partly loosened brake-shoes. And then the special with its white flags flappin' from the pilot started on its long wild night's ride, clatterin' over open switches—jarrin' and pantin' ahead, past train after train of sided cattle-cars and halted switchers.

There was five hundred and seventy miles of glitterin' rails between us and the Denver terminal. And but five hundred and eighty minutes before the last fast express would be leavin' the Colorado capital for the swift four-hour run that would make the town of Pueblo with but eleven minutes to spare before noon!

There would have to be ideal conditions throughout for us to accomplish our part. That we knew at the start. But a record run was what the road had long needed—with the Burlington and the Northern Pacific always tooting of their faster schedules, and the Rock Island just enterin' the competin' field.

We slipped rapidly past the stockyards and packin'-houses, our heads set directly westward toward the oscillatin' disk of the lowerin' sun sinkin' in the distant cornfields far ahead. Our vibration constantly increased as we sped down upon a cheerin' freight crew, their relief blowing while a heavy plume of smoke was boilin' high

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above them in the still, torrid air.

It got hot as blazes as we sped along gettin' well away from the Missouri. A warm head-wind blew in upon us as like out of a furnace. To the left lay the Platte River, with not enough runnin' water in her wide sandy bed to quench a coyote's thirst, and radiatin' heat enough to kill white folks. But what corn was growin' close up to the right-o'-way. In places train-high, all tasseled, silver crested.

Station-men stared out of wide-open doors, as we passed, the operators wavin' good luck as they turned to their instruments to send off our arrivin' time.

We soon ran into a fine section of heavy rails newly ballasted. I took out my watch and nodded to Kennedy who grasped my meanin' and prepared to let her out the limit. He cut back the reverse lever shortenin' the valve stroke as far as possible, and then threw the throttle wide open. It seemed most as if the big engine was liftin' herself off the iron an' that we were soarin' just over the rails.

I held my watch on her for ten minutes not sayin' a word. We passed sixty at a gallop, and then sixty-five; at seventy the first thrill came over me, but at seventy-five it wasn't like railroadin' any more.

"I watched from the wiry little fireman to the steam gage, and from the gage back to the fireman again, to see if he could hold her up to it. The pointer kept oscillatin' steadily over the one-hundred-and-eighty mark, and that with a wide-open throttle! And the exhausts comin' so fast they sounded more like the drummin' of the partridge in the wood, than a locomotive. But all the time the fireman kept workin' harder shaking his grates, slicin' her open, coalin' lightly, ticklin' her here and there, him black and grimy, with rivers of perspiration trackin' his face with clean streaks.

He saw I didn't quite understand his hurry, so he stepped over tappin' his finger on the water-glass, flung the furnace door open wide and then as the flame licked out through the doorway he reached over and turned on the water to quench her burnin' thirst, just in time to prevent the flutterin' steam at her dome from poppin' the safety. He was back to his fire coalin' heavily again, and then with his head out the window an' his eyes on the stack was watchin' the black sooty smoke which soon cleared away showin' that she was cuttin' her fire beautifully.

The heavy Pullmans rocked and jolted on behind by the constantly increasin' momentum as the big engine leaped and lurched. Inwardly she was purrin' and throbbin', but always she roared on through the corn-fields, over the narrow ribbons of steel, that kept openin' up, while catapultin' mile-posts, and cattle-guards came hurtlin' down upon us. Behind us the heavy smoke lay rollin' on the back track like a wounded genii torn an' rended by that mighty fire-eating Chimera that sped on dizzy, drunk, reelin', as if mad with its wild momentum.

IT WAS 10:21 when we pulled into Grand Island, at the end of that first fast division. We had cut fifty-nine minutes from No. 6's runnin' time, while I had only hoped for fifty or fifty-five at the outside.

"If they all do as well," I muttered, shaking Kennedy's grimy hand after thanking his hard workin' fireman, "it'll be a new record run."

He grinned back as his form faded out in the darkness. It might be, I thought as the tired engine *choofed* down the yard to the roundhouse, that he was grinnin' to think how easily he had won an extra week's pay on that short fast run.

Personally, I breathed a sigh of relief that that old engine had stood such a severe test, for I had noticed that one of her cylinder-heads was weak, before we had passed Fremont, and feared it might blow off, leavin' us crippled 'tween stations.

But all this proved to be only child's play compared with what lay ahead, for we had only covered a hundred and fifty out of the five-hundred-and-seventy-mile journey. While ahead of us yet was a constantly increasin' grade with its higher elevation to contend with. It was then that it dawned upon me that we had a hard night's work ahead, but how hard and wild it was destined to be I had no idea then.

Hardwell, the engineer on the second division, was one of the road's fastest men. He was due to pull the Overland Limited west five hours later, but had been ordered to be in readiness for a record run on the fast special.

Hardwell was a bright little fellow, but didn't live to pull a dozen more trains after

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that night. It was a severe shock to us all, his death, for he ran by his orders at Elm Creek and was side-swiped by a fruit express that burst his boiler and cooked him and his fireman to death.

But that night I noticed the impatient look in his eyes, as he coupled on, and waited for the signal to go ahead.

"What's our stunt?" he inquired as I climbed aboard.

But I could see that he and the fireman had already been posted.

"We've cut fifty-nine off the first division," I explained, "and I expect you to reduce your division by just as much!"

His eyes flashed as he received my statement, but he said nothing. My supper was sent up just as we were pullin' out. I set the pail of coffee upon the flat head of the boiler while I ate my chicken sandwiches and pie.

We had hardly started before the fireman came over and complained at the slaty tank of coal, which would not coke up readily, and consequently ran through the grates. It was then that I noted that he had only a hundred and sixty pounds on the gage. The only advice that I could give was to run a thicker fire and not shake it so severely that live coals would be lost.

A bad stop at the water-spout at Lexington caused us to lose a couple more valuable minutes, while the remainin' sixty miles to North Platte occupied just sixty minutes. That left us just four minutes short of my schedule for the second division. We had, however, made some mighty fast sections, and I was certain with better fuel we would have exceeded rather than lost on the one-hundred-and-forty-mile tangent.

But it's right at this point that the strange part of the whole thing commenced. Not that it wasn't wild the way that we ripped up some of those fast sections, that was unusual—but—the way we finished—a tearin' along with a faster locomotive than we'd had yet, so fast that most of the time we were only hittin' the high spots—so that whole sections had to be respiked before another passenger could be allowed over the rails! That's what I call frenzied railroadin' for fair!

McDougal, a big brawny Scotchman, pulled the throttle on the one-hundred-and-twenty-ton compound that took us out of North Platte. Just as he had backed down I received orders, along with a private message from the Old Man, congratulatin' us on the record we were makin', and urgin' me to better my schedule should opportunity offer. I read his message to the crew as we chafed under an enforced delay, that was really but a minute, while the yardmen greased a dry axle-box on the forward sleeper. As we were about to pull out a big stalwart man whom I recognized at once as our lone passenger came stumbling up the cab steps cane in hand.

"What do you want here?" I called, standing above him, barring his passage as he groped for the handle.

"What are you stopping for?" he shouted. "Don't you know we've got to hurry?"

"We stopped to change engines," I replied. "And we're ready to start right away. Get back into your Pullman—you're delayin' us."

"I'll ride here," he answered, puffing. He was bareheaded, but otherwise fully dressed, as he had been at the Omaha station six hours before.

"You're delayin' us. We can't hope to make that Denver connection if you hold us up any longer," I shouted.

"Then go ahead!" he yelled. "I'll ride here. I'm an engineer myself; pull your throttle open at once, sir!"

"All right," I replied. "Sit behind the driver if you're goin' to ride here. You'll be sick of fast ridin' before we stop for water!"

McDougal let the steam into the cylinders, steadily crowdin' them all he could, and cuttin' back the valve stroke rapidly so that before we had passed the distant signal of the last yard-switch the big compound was lurchin' ahead at full express speed.

Compounds were new to us in them days. They were the first big improvement over the popular eight-wheelers that we had used for years with such satisfactory results on lighter loads and low grades. But the compound was a grade-climber. That we found out early on the U. P.

Upton, the Englishman, sat stampin' the floor with his cane, peerin' here and there, but mostly watchin' the steam, air and water gages, as their tremblin' indicators rose and fell. A fruit express glimmered on the up-track, enlarged, roared by, and was swallowed up in the darkness. He hadn't been with us more than an hour when we slowed down at Ogallala, where we met the Chicago express standin' on

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the eastbound track takin' water. He demanded to know where it was from. I told him that she had left Denver at nine the night before.

At this he pulled out his watch while I had gone out to see that we were given immediate service, and what orders, if any, there might be for us. As I returned, followed by McDougal, who had been oilin' her link-motion and giving the cups a once-over, we faced a frantic Englishman stamping about the cab.

"How are you goin' to make that connection," he shouted, "if that train left at *nine* last night? That's six hours ago! In six hours it will be nine o'clock in the morning! It will be nine o'clock when we reach Denver and my train leaves at seven-forty!"

I signaled Mac to proceed, not heedin' his wild speech. But of a sudden his face become livid and his eyes set and starin'.

"Men," he shouted, turning square facin' us, "you've got to go faster! Do you hear—or it will be too late to make that Pueblo connection! That's the last train that'll get me there in time to beat Adam Grayson! And we've got to make it! Five hundred dollars if you reach Denver in time! Understand—five hundred on the side if I catch up to him!"

"We'll do it," I shouted. "Providin' there's no accidents!"

We were clippin' off better'n a mile a minute as I spoke.

"Do it!" he roared back. "Then you've got to go faster—or you're goin' to lose—and your company will lose three thousand bonus I offered, providin' I reach Denver five minutes before train time!"

"It's faster goin' now," I replied.

"What do you say?" he howled. "Faster goin'—then let her out, have you forgotten? It's 7:40 she leaves! I've got to reach Pueblo at noon. The option expires today! We've been tricked and swindled, our assayists bought out over our heads! Adam Grayson is on that train ahead—it's him I must head off! It's seventy-two per cent. copper, not twenty-two! It's a fortune, man, and he's tryin' to steal it! He's in with a gang of Yankee crooks! But one of them squealed—sold out to us—but now it's almost too late!"

He had risen, and his body was shakin' violently, his eyes starin' from their sockets.

"But by —— I'll not be fooled!" he roared. "Put a head of steam on her, Fireman, so she blows! Do you hear? crowd on every pound she'll take or we're runnin' for nothing!"

"We're doin' our best, sir," retorted the fireman, as he shook the grates and fired and poked, while the seethin' flame roared through her very vitals.

Like a livin' monster the big compound responded to the call. Throbbin' and reelin' she flung herself into the shadowy night, quiverin' at every joint. Like a race-horse thoroughly heated, its mettle roused, its wild speed forces unbridled, 866—that was her number—roared on, her cab pitchin' and swayin' heavily.

"We're makin' seventy-five now!" I shouted in Upton's ear, as I crossed behind him to take out the water can, spillin' most of it as I jolted unsteadily.

"Seventy-five," he glowered. "Make it eighty! A hundred extra, Fireman, if you make it eighty!"

He banged his heavy cane viciously against the boiler head and then grimly glared out of the window at the stunted corn-fields of the moonlit prairie.

"How are we gettin' any nearer Denver!" he vociferated, drawing back. "We've been goin' through corn all night—and we're in the same corn-field yet! Drop off those heavy sleepers, Engineer. What good are they. Cut 'em off an' we'll shoot ahead!"

"Can't do it, sir. We need them for ballast—or we'd jump into the ditch in a jiffy the way we're runnin' tonight," I expostulated.

"You're mad!" he cried, facing me. "They're holdin' us back. What difference will it make if we stay on the track or not if we don't reach Denver before 7:40!"

But still the sweatin' fireman shoveled and sliced and bent before the roaring bowl of flame, not answerin' a word, while the driver sat Sphinx-like peering ahead, pullin' his whistle, or quick lookin' over his valves and gages, but mostly with his left hand holding the throttle, ready to shut 'er off and reverse on a split-second's warning. But always the semaphore lights showed clear as they glimmered ahead and then came sweeping down upon us.

Upton still watched as the fireman shoveled and broke and grubbed down fresh coal from far back in the tank, while the exhaust steam was shootin' through the roaring crater of flame as though in a

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last extremity to maintain the wild speed over the heavier grade.

"Are we makin' eighty now—are we makin' it now?"

"No," I replied, "but nearly."

"Then you've got to go faster. For —— sake, man, cut off those two heavy Pullmans you're draggin' along. You've got to go faster and you can't. What's the good of those heavy sleepers you're toting up hill all night just to satisfy a —— crazy train-master who'd rather see me lose that copper mine than take a chance of springin' a rail! I'll pay for the damages. I'll pay for the train! I'll respike this whole —— line!"

He was waxin' violent again, his cane cuttin' through the air as he lurched and tore about. A sudden jolt over a high rail pitched the cab heavily and he lost his balance and would have fallen through the gangway had not the fireman reached out and seized his up-flung arm as he staggered backwards.

"Sit down!" I yelled, as I steadied myself on the uneven billowin' floor. "We're makin' a record run, and we'll get you in on time!"

"I will not!" he roared, "I'm boss of this train. I'm payin' dear enough for this ride! We've got to go faster! Now for the dash! Cut off them heavy coaches at once! I'll not be fooled further—I'll not lose that mine! It's a matter of life and death with me now, I say—I've got to save that option and I've got to head ffo Adam Grayson, and I'm going to! Double charge of coal, man, cram her with steam! Two hundred extra, Fireman, if you make her blow at full speed ahead! What in ——! You're slowing down!"

THE lights of the town caught his eye as he stared out through the lurchin' window.

"Julesburg!" shouted the driver. "Now, sir, we're inside the Colorado line!"

With a hoarse warning whistle, then, the wild runnin' special rushed through the sleepin' town. Curvin' through the yard we roared out into the prairie beyond, bathed in pale-yellow moonlight, hissin' and throbbin', the heavy pressure crowdin' the indicator over, while the live steam was flutterin' spitefully at the dome. Then slowly the pointer receded as the full charge was opened into the cylinders.

And so the monotony of the hard fought night wore on. An hour passed, and still the same wild speed continued, until the first faint copper rim showed back in the lightenin' eastern horizon.

The heat of the earlier evening on the lower plains was chill now in the higher altitudes of the Colorado table-lands. The moon paled in the western sky—having traveled faster than the friction-bound special.

As we made our last change of engines at Sterling the red ball of the sun rose back over the eastern prairie. About us now stretched the bleak hilly landscape of eastern Colorado. The corn-fields were gone, only wild buffalo grass adorned the rough rollin' hills.

A pack of prairie dogs sat on a distant sunny knoll warmin' themselves in the first slantin' sun rays, sittin' high on their haunches watchin' the wildly runnin' special, with its crowded engine-cab. While behind two vacant sleepers trailed, joltin', roarin', unused except as ballast to steady the plungin' iron monster that hurled itself on into the hazy blue of the western skyline.

Upton had promptly renewed his offers of money to the new engine-crew. Stebbs, the fireman, grinnin' discreetly, assured the wild-eyed capitalist that he would keep up the pressure in spite of the higher grade.

On the back track the ink-blue shriekin' trail rolled and gyrated above the singin' hot rails, while a scatterin' hail of live cinders pelted the pebbled roadbed. By the right-o'-way the dry river-bed of the Platte still blew dusty and arid. Occasional herds of grazin' cattle passed, and thick slow-movin' masses of weather-beaten sheep which stopped and bleated as though they knew that the swift-rushin' passenger was something unusual, and that its hoarse warnin' whistle was too late for the early morning train that woke them from their slumbers each Summer morning.

Far beyond the morning mists had risen, clearin' the obscured horizon. Straight ahead appeared the low rough contour of the distant mountains across the western skyline momentarily becomin' more distinct and sharp in outline. Stebbs, the fireman, had got the first clear vision afar.

"There's the Rockies ahead," he shouted, seizing the long slice-bar which he hammered, flattening its blunt edge upon the iron floor apron.

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Upton turned from his day-musing and glared ahead.

"Ah man," he cried, "there they are. And over southward yonder is that copper mine. If we only had time. If the option had only run until one o'clock I could have beat Adam Grayson. But we're goin' to miss it!"

"Going to miss it!" interrupted Stebbs. "We're goin' to make it. Just keep your eyes peeped on that rim of mountains wonder. Watch 'em grow, now we're runnin' head on to 'em. Seems like we ought to have met the Omaha Flyer 'fore this."

He finished hammerin' the slice-bar and broke the crusted fire into a blazin', molten mass. Roundin' a curve and thunderin' over a deep ravine a perfect section of track stretched ahead."

"There she shows!" he shouted, pointing to a smudgy streak in the distance, growin' with each second.

Then with the impendin' swoop of a tornado the murmur rose to a tumult on the still morning air. The whistles sounded, and with a deafenin' roar, the daylight express, careening, sped by.

Staggered by the sudden envelopment of a stinging cloud of alkali dust which obliterated all vision ahead, Upton reeled forward and would have fallen again but for the black, grimy hand of the fireman that laid hold of him.

"Sit down!" roared Stebbs, his hand protectin' his mouth.

Several minutes passed in silence, while Upton operated on his eyes and cleared his throat and nostrils.

"How—how—long was she out?" he blurted, as soon as he could speak.

"Two-forty, makes up at Denver," answered Stebbs.

"Two-forty, then she's three hours out. Why, man, it's 5:47 now! Then by heavens why don't you ease up? What kind of a game are you tryin' to play! You pocketed my hundred dollars. And I don't believe we've made up an hour on the other train since we started! And Adam Grayson is on the train ahead! And he'll get there on time! But I'll lose—I see it all now—it's all a game from the manager down—you've all held out hope—just bare hope! You've worked under instructions to leech me!"

"You're wrong," shouted Stebbs. "We'll make it!"

"Wrong am I—you will play to the very last? It will be 8:40 when we reach Denver and you know it! And I have lost my copper mine! Adam Grayson has won!"

"We'll get you there on time," snarled Stebbs. "Ask the boss there," pointin' to me.

"Ask him! What for—wasn't he selected to play the game?"

The white heat of anger again swept over his face as he sank back dazed.

Worn out with his wild night's ride in the engine cab, his hair disheveled, his face smeared, his white linen blotched and grimy, he sat staring vacantly out of the window. An hour passed and then another, yet he did not move, although the mountains had grown and now loomed up in the distance half-blockin' the cab windows.

THEN the wild speed slackened, the monster engine was purrin' and throbbin' again, and the other train noises became more subdued. The hoarse whistle sounded oftener. Low brick houses began to flash by in the morning sunlight. The crew were watchin' ahead as though expectin' something unusual to happen.

"Get ready, sir!" I shouted, breaking the long stolid silence as the semaphore arm outstretched before us, jerked and dropped, indicatin' clear track ahead.

Upton had pulled out his timepiece, staring blankly at it, mutterin' wildly, with his eyes still riveted on his watch:

"Only for an hour! —— for an hour! To have headed him off. What a coup!"

Melancholy again seized him and he smiled vacantly into the fireman's face.

"Give me a drink," he demanded huskily. "Give me whisky!"

Stebbs tendered him a small bottle. Wild-eyed, he seized it and drained its contents.

"You fellows tried your best," he muttered dejectedly. "But that don't help."

"Sure it does, and it's your treat," replied Stebbs, notin' the last signal-arm had dropped, showin' a clear track to the terminal.

"My treat! —— how I would have treated! I'd have given twenty thousand if it would have helped!"

Curvin' beneath the long train-sheds over the clickin' rail-ends, the special threaded her way, her bell clangin' furiously,

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frightenin' scurryin' passengers disembarkin' from a long line of sleepers ahead.

"Denver, Mr. Upton," I shouted, all excited as the driver let on the air, and the motion ceased. "There's No. 6 ahead of us, sir, with only half the passengers out of her Pullmans! I told you we'd make it! Why man, that's the fastest night's run ever made this side of the Missouri! I knew these compounds would make good and they were extra limber this trip!"

Upton stood like one dazed, as though we were playing a bunco game—to get the additional five hundred dollars he had offered.

"I don't believe it! I'll not pay another cent!" he bellowed.

Jennings, the engineer, turned and pointed across the tracks.

"There's your train now, Mr. Upton, making up on track nine. See the sign? 'Colorado Springs and Pueblo, Limited Express,' better hurry over and engage your Pullman section, or you'll be crowded into a chair car, sir!"

"That's not the 7:40. That's another train!" yelled Upton. "You're forty-three minutes late! You've run hard, but you've lost!"

"Look at the tower, that's Western Union time, sir!"

"You lie!" he roared, drawing out his watch and holdin' it up defiantly in the engineer's face." "There's the time! That's right! That clock's an hour slow!"

"You're an hour fast—that's the 7:40 express makin' up there," I shouted.

"By ——, sirs, what does this mean!" he cried, swept off his feet in his excitement, as he leaped down the cab steps to the tracks below, we all following him, an' the porter runnin' up with his hat and grip.

"It's Yankee trickery I know—it's a national swindle!" he roared, stoppin' and turnin' on us. "Your road has stopped that clock on purpose to bleed me! I'll not be robbed! I'll sue your old —— road for this! I'll not be filched of the last cent and not get redress—I'll warn you of that!"

"Go ask the conductor of the Rio Grande," I shouted. "You'll find that you're wrong. You're an hour fast, man!"

"I've not been drugged!" he shouted bewilderedly, movin' across the tracks.

"But your watch is fast," I shouted. "Where did you set it back last?"

"In St. Paul!" he bellowed, not stoppin'.

"In St. Paul!" I yelled. "Then set it back another hour, man! This is mountain time! That's your train there. She leaves in just seventeen minutes. We've won your bonus fairly, sir, with three minutes to spare!"

Like a miracle the whole thing flashed upon him.

"You don't mean it! You don't mean it!" he roared. "Why of course. Why didn't I know it! Then I'm in time you say! But where's my man? Then where's Adam Grayson, I say. It's him I've got to beat! He was on that regular train. He should be here now—I see him!"

And he rushed turbulently ahead and confronted a portly traveler loaded down with grips and hand-bags, strugglin' across a maze of tracks from the train ahead.

"Why! Why good gracious—Thornton Upton! Why, what's the matter? How the deuce did you get here? Why, I left you safe in London!"

But Thornton Upton, wild-eyed and disheveled, merely stood glarin' at his blinkin', astounded adversary for a full minute while the rest of us gathered about them. Then his tense face broke into smiles—wild fantastic smiles, and pokin' his walkin'-stick into the corpulent waistcoat of Adam Grayson, he shouted:

"Ha! Ha! Adam Grayson! I've headed you off at last—though it's taken a fortune to do it! But that's what I came speedin' across this continent for—to catch you and to give you the ha! ha!"

Then utterin' a wild whoop he dashed across the intervenin' space and disappeared behind the crowds surging toward the south-bound Pueblo express!

"AND did he win?" came from a dozen strained voices, as the old engine-man reached for his pipe. "Did he save the option?"

"Well, I knew you'd ask it," answered the old man. "But there wasn't any option to save! We found out later that the poor cuss was insane, that the mine story was a hoax, a mental obsession caused by heavy losses in stock gamblin', and that Adam Grayson was a member of a brokerage company that had sold him the stock. Grayson himself had sailed hurriedly for America in response to a cable from his daughter who had been convalescing at the Springs."

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SALT of the EARTH

by W·C·TUTTLE

Author of "Upside Down or Backwards," "Muley's Morals," etc.

"I RECKON you fellers will have to take it out in trade," he states, leaning on the counter, weary-like, and making funny little figures with his pencil. "When I sent you fellers out to do that piece uh work I has money uh-plenty, but right now I couldn't buy uh humming-bird's breakfast. I figured out a new system on the roulette wheel, and played her last night."

Me and Magpie looks around the place, and rolls us some smokes.

"Fifty feet at four dollars uh foot comes to two hundred dollars," remarks Magpie, looking at the stock. "You got that much worth in here?"

"Uh-huh. I have if yuh both takes uh suit uh clothes and——"

"We'll take it. I'm glad you ain't in the piano business."

Me and Magpie took that contract 'cause we needed the money. We're on one of our annual pilgrimages after the filthy lucre in the rough, and we takes this here job so we can buy uh regular grubstake.

It was Magpie's system. Magpie is so danged tall that he can't feel blisters on his heels, and he's up so high that he most always gets the wrong perspective of earthly things.

I'm Ike Harper. I'm meek and lowly uh nature, Magpie's pardner through ungovernable circumstances, and I got bowlegs. I'd uh been uh self-made man if Magpie hadn't come along and spoiled the plans and specifications.

Uh burro is uh plumb placid animal. You can abuse uh burro—try to scare it; starve it and forget to give it uh drink, but all it will ever do is to give you uh sad look, and kick —— out of you some day for being kind to it. Lodestone was the most placid burro on earth, and the saddest one of our four, but when me and Magpie approaches him with our new apparel, he busts his rope, kicks me in the floating ribs, and *hee-haws* off down the street like uh overgrown jackrabbit loaded with loco.

This is all that Ike Harper is going to tell of this story. For once in my life I'm going to pass the buck. There's uh hombre named "Sad Slim" Sanderson, who knoweth this tale full well, and from now on he's doing the talking. Sabe?

DID yuh ever hear of Painted Post? It ain't neither uh city, village nor uh town. It consists of one side of uh street, one saloon, uh general store which is closed up, uh place where yuh

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used to be able to buy uh meal, but which is also uh memory.

Painted Post ain't inhabited—it's infested. I adds my bit uh discomfort to Painted Post uh few moons ago, and gets acquainted with "Whispering" Smith, "Forty-Dollar" Fisher and "Lonesome" Larson. The four of us completes the census. We spends our time on the shady side of Lonesome's saloon and figures on how long we can subsist without tarnishing our sacred honor.

Whispering says that on account of the unsanitary jails in Utah he can't live in that State. Forty-Dollar loves his country but hates its marshals. Lonesome hopes some day to grow enough yaller whiskers to disguise himself against North Dakota officials. His wife lives there, on his money, but won't meet him half-way.

I ain't wanted—much. I'm peaceable—sort uh peaceable. I was in jail once for uh minor offense. I licked uh feller 'cause he wouldn't listen to me sing, and they throwed me in jail. On the way down to the correction cabin I glimpses the sheriff from the adjoining county. Having the feeling that he ain't down there on pleasure, I proceeds to remove myself from that jail, by putting uh chair on top uh the bunk and pushing uh section off the roof. Some folks never think about uh jail roof being the line of least resistance.

"Gold is where yuh finds it," states Forty-Dollar, leaning back against the wall and spitting at uh lizard. "Now take that prospect uh mine, for instance. It——"

"Yah!" interrupts Lonesome. "That's all anybody would take it for. You owes me thirty-seven dollars now. When do I get it?"

"As I was saying," continues Forty-Dollar, "it——"

"Ain't there," laughs Whispering. "My little prospect up on Windy Gulch——"

"Is on uh par with mine," says I. "If Lonesome wasn't such uh good old scout——"

"Salve!" snorts Lonesome. "Good scouts starve to death. Why don't some of you alleged prospectors find something besides uh thirst?"

"What we need," grins Forty-Dollar, "is somebody who will shoot his roll on that old saying: gold is where you find it. I'd sell if I had uh chance."

"Sell?" squeaks Whispering. "If somebody offered me uh quart uh good hooch——hear me? I said *good* hooch. Why, I'd——"

"Mine is good," defends Lonesome.

"For this country, Lonesome," replies Whispering. "Yuh got to consider that I ain't always lived where uh man has to shock his nervous system just 'cause he's dry. I've met whisky that was uh drink—not uh jolt."

"I think it all leads to the same grave," grins Lonesome. "If you ain't too danged stuck on your throat I'd ask yuh all to have uh jolt."

We all lines up at the bar and gets inoculated with Bright's disease and paralysis. We're waiting the first symptoms, when into the open door emerges the head of uh yaller burro, and it announces its presence and discomfort by yodeling uh stanza or two.

"The same to you," proclaims Whispering, when the song is over.

And then into the saloon pilgrims two specimens uh humanity that beggars description. The first is taller than I am, and that's speaking of elevations.

He's got uh long, sad sort uh face, with plenty uh hair on his upper lip. He wears uh black suit uh store clothes, which makes him look like uh pencil mark, and on his head is uh hard hat. He's got on shiny leather shoes—with buttons on. He's got uh boiled shirt and uh collar which is at least four inches high, but which is inadequate to conceal further than his Adam's-apple. His tie is of many hues, and on his hands is yaller kid gloves.

The one in the rear is worth uh word. He stands about five feet, eight inches, high, and is garbed in black-and-white checked pants, an undertaker's coat, with tails, and shows uh shirt of saffron hue and uh purple tie. The hat is of the hard variety, brown of color, and his shoes are yaller with green tops. His legs shows uh decided arc at the knees. They looks us over, appraising-like, and then the tall one takes off his hat and polishes it with his sleeve.

"Gents," says he, "what hamlet is this?"

"Painted Post," replies Whispering. "The city uh Painted Post extends you uh welcome."

"Have uh little jolt," invites Lonesome, and they shows uh complete familiarity with such proceedings.

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"Strangers?" asks Forty-Dollar, and the tall one looks around slow-like.

"Evidently," says he.

The short one nods—

"Without uh shadder of uh doubt."

"You don't happen to be looking for uh prospect, do yuh?" inquires Whispering.

"Fair," says the tall one. "Good covers too much territory. Is there such uh thing around here?"

"Purchase, promotion or paltry gain?" inquires Forty-Dollar.

"Something that looks good might hit our fleeting fancy," replies the tall one, and the short one nods and sips whisky that would kill uh coyote at pointblank range. "Something that looks good," he agrees. "First we must find uh place of abode."

"To sleep, and so forth," agrees Whispering. "Take my cabin. It's got uh dirt floor and few of the comforts uh home, but you're plumb welcome. I holes up with Forty-Dollar.

"Gents, my name is Smith, and called Whispering 'cause I can't. This one is Forty-Dollar Fisher, and the poison-mixer is Lonesome Larson. That elongated animile over there is Sad Sanderson, whose middle name is Slim. As representatives of Painted Post we welcomes yuh."

"We take it, and are pleased to meet yuh," says the tall one. "I am of the tribe of Simpkins, and my pardner answers to the name of Harper. We thanks you for your seeming generosity. If you'll point out the cabin we'll bless yuh."

"THERE is our grubstake," chuckles Whispering, as them two P. T. Barnum nightmares pilgrims off to the cabin with their burros. "Them hombres got money."

"And no way to pry it loose," wails Forty-Dollar. "How yuh going to sell nothing to even uh tenderfoot for something?"

"Tenderfoot is right," grins Whispering. "Look at the stuff they got packed on them burros. Rocking-chairs, garden-rakes, uh hoe, uh half-dozen brooms and uh box uh soap! My gosh! I'll sell 'em the Yaller Chunk."

"What about my Golden Glow property?" asks Forty-Dollar.

"And my Web uh Gold workings?" I asks.

"Fools fight but wise men figure," states Lonesome.

"Maybe they knows something about rock," I complains. "We ain't got nothing to show."

"Salt," replies Whispering. "Season 'em."

"What with?" demands Forty. "We ain't got no gold to salt with."

"How much?" inquires Lonesome.

"Plenty," says Whispering. "Give 'em enough so they won't haggle about the price."

"I know!" exclaims Lonesome. "Take uh shotgun and load her with gold. Bang into the rock! Haw! haw! haw! So?"

"Exactly," agrees Forty. "You're uh wise man, Lonesome."

"You know it," and he takes the bottle off the bar.

"Ho, hum-m-m-m!" yawns Forty. "It's always the way. When yuh got money you can make money. I wish I knowed uh man who had uh little money to bet on uh cinch. Ain't you got none, Lonesome? Man, this is better than five aces in uh poker game."

"I plays safe," states Lonesome. "If you show me where I can get my money back and fifty per cent. interest, I'll talk."

"Lonesome, your folks must uh come from the Holy Land," opines Whispering. "All them fellers wants is something that looks good. If I had uh little gold I could make granite look good to them."

"Let's wait and find out if they got any money," advises Lonesome, and we all agrees.

We opens up our usual poker game, and plays for futures. When them specimens comes in I'm loser half uh million, so we shuts up the game, and prepares to visit.

"Nice looking country around here," opines Simpkins.

"Best on earth," agrees Whispering. "She's in uh class by herself."

"I'd back up that last assertion," agrees Harper. "Anything in the mineral line been found around here lately?"

"Well," says Forty-Dollar, moving up close and speaking in uh low tone. "Now, that you've brought up the subject, we may as well let yuh in on uh good thing. We've kept it under cover for uh long time. This place is the richest district in——"

"I've got uh prospect—" begins Whispering, but Forty waves him to silence.

"Now, my piece uh property is worth uh hundred thousand dollars, and to the ordinary eye she ain't worth six bits.

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You've heard that old saying that gold is where yuh find it? Well, there she is! The formation ain't gold-bearing—not according to books, but yuh can't dispute your own eyes."

"I reckon it would take too much money," replies Simpkins. "We ain't looking to buy no mint."

"Uh-huh," agrees Forty. "She's uh valuable thing, but I ain't no Shylock. I'm uh plain ordinary prospector, and I believes in the equality uh man. Make me an offer. Uh course I wants yuh to see and test the property. When can yuh go up there?"

"Where is it?" asks Harper.

"She's called the Golden Glow, and she's located in the second gulch above here—three miles. When can yuh look at it?"

Simpkins scratches his head for uh spell, and picks on the buttons on his shiny shoes.

"Well, there ain't no sure thing that I wants to buy. Yuh see we wants to look things over and maybe find something for ourselves. Tomorrow we'll take our hoe and rocking-chair, and look around."

"Hoe and rocking-chair!" snorts Whispering. "Prospect with utensils like that?"

"Uh-huh," nods Simpkins. "There ain't no use in being uncomfortable. The feller what sold 'em to us said they'd come in awful handy. Yuh can't always find a good place to set down."

"I feels that you'll like this Golden Glow," states Forty-Dollar. "Uh course it will take uh little cash."

"Magpie can write uh check for fifty thousand," states Harper.

"You can, too, Ike. We're pardners in all things." Simpkins grins.

"My gosh!" whoops Whispering, after they're gone. "If we don't get uh stake out uh them I'm uh liar. They're the greenest things that ever follered uh jackass."

"If we had the wherewith to salt," says I. "You can't sell 'em nothing without uh showing uh some kind, Whispering."

"Where do I profit if I furnish the salt?" asks Lonesome.

"There's four of us," states Whispering. "If you furnish the salt, uh course you're entitled to uh little more than the rest of us, Lonesome. Suppose you take uh fourth and the three of us split the remainder?"

"Some day you're going to give away your right name, Whispering," grins Lonesome. "I'll take uh third, and all the salt back."

"All right. I'll let you have uh third, Lonesome. It's more——"

"Being as it's my claim I'll take uh third, and you and Whispering can split the other third to suit yuh, Sad," states Forty. "How does that suit yuh?"

"Just like tarantalers," says I. "Forty, your mine ain't worth six bits. Me and Whispering will take that other third and half uh your share and pay you six bits to boot."

"Give me the six bits now?"

"After the deal is over," says I, and Forty-Dollar nods. Lonesome opens his little iron safe and takes out uh buckskin poke. He lays it on the bar and fingers it, loving-like.

"Here is forty-four ounces," he states. "It's Horse Crick gold and she runs eighteen dollars per ounce. I bought it from 'Swede' Swanson this Spring. How much do yuh want?"

"I got uh ten-gage muzzle-loader," informs Forty-Dollar. "She takes two ounces uh shot to uh load."

"My——!" wails Lonesome. "Seventy-two dollars! How many times you going to shoot, Forty?"

"Twice. I'll shoot her into some uh that soft stuff, and it'll be uh cinch to pan it all out again. We'll get it all back."

Lonesome weighs out four ounces and hands it to Forty-Dollar.

"I'll go over and load her right up," announces Forty. "In the morning I'll sneak up there early and shoot her full uh wealth. No use of all of us going, 'cause we don't want 'em to suspicion anything."

THE next morning Forty-Dollar joins the thirsty circle around Lonesome's, and rubs his hands with satisfaction.

"She sure is salted to the queen's taste," he states. "Anybody seen anything uh them rocking-chair miners today?"

Nobody had, and we don't see 'em until evening, when they saunters into our midst.

"Well, how's prospecting?" asks Forty-Dollar.

"Tolable," replies Magpie. "We'd admire to see that Golden Glow mine tomorrow."

"The pleasure will all be ours," says Forty.

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"Get any game?" asks Ike, offhand-like.

"Game? What game?"

"Thought I seen you packing uh shotgun today. Maybe I was mistaken."

"Oh!" grunts Forty-Dollar. "No, I didn't. I was after fool-hens."

The next day we all goes up to the Golden Glow. Them two hombres insists on taking their chair along, and one of them carries the hoe. We strings along up to the hole in the ground. Forty-Dollar immediate and soon makes us uh lecture on gold-bearing formations, and hands Magpie uh pick and shovel. Harper sets down in the chair and rolls uh smoke.

"Dig right here," explains Forty-Dollar, pointing out the correct spot. "It's uh cinch you'll find something good."

Magpie digs out uh lot uh soft stuff and dumps into in the pan.

"Now," states Forty, "we'll pound it all up fine, and pan it down at the crick. I'll bet that pan will show more than ten thousand to the ton."

We smashes it up fine, and packs it down to the crick. Whispering hands the pan to Magpie, who squats down and begins to pan her out. We all leans over him, interested-like, but Harper sets up there on the bank in his rocking-chair, and takes life easy. If I had fifty thousand I'd do it, too.

The dirt washes lower and lower, until only uh spoonful remains and in it is one tiny speck uh gold.

"Pretty lean, don't you think?" asks Magpie.

Me and Whispering and Lonesome stares at Forty-Dollar, and he stares at the pan. Pretty soon he reaches down, takes the pan out of Magpie's hands and stirs the contents. He tosses it out in the crick, and scratches his head.

"How much uh pan?" asks Harper.

"Trace," replies Magpie; "bare trace. Not worth the wear and tear on our rocking-chair and hoe, Ike. Let's go back."

Conversation is scarce on the way home. Magpie and Ike comments on the sunset, and we don't notice it. They goes up to their cabin and we goes in the saloon. We sets down facing Forty-Dollar, and waits for him to explain.

"Well," says he, "I shot both barrels into that spot, and there ain't nothing there."

"I'll swear to the last," agrees Whispering. "Hardly uh trace. Where is it, Forty?"

"Seventy-two dollars is more than uh trace," states Lonesome, sliding his gun around to the front. "I'd admire to know about things."

"Letting uh pair uh rocking-chair miners laugh at us," says I, sarcastic-like.

"It must be there!" squeaks Forty-Dollar.

"Unless," says Lonesome, "some folks hate to put their money in the ground."

"Wait uh minute, Lonesome!" snaps Forty. "Don't insinuate that I'd steal that money. I'm honest—I am. Gosh Almighty, I'm as surprised as you are."

"But not so pained," states Lonesome. "It was my money."

"Well, it's gone," says Whispering. "Them two hombres were all ready to buy, too. Did yuh notice how careless that Magpie person handles uh gold-pan?"

"Handling uh shotgun careless is more of uh crime," says Lonesome, sad-like.

Finally Forty-Dollar observes, apologetic-like—

"There's still the Yaller Chuck."

"Yes," agrees Whispering. "There is still my property."

Just then in comes Magpie and Ike. They sets 'em up to us, and talks of leaving soon.

"I might interest yuh if you're looking for uh real mine," states Whispering. "Yuh see I ain't in good shape physically, and I got to get out uh this climate pretty soon. Now, I got uh claim, the Yaller Chuck, which lies east uh here about uh mile. She's new, gents, but she's uh hummer. I'm waiting for assays right now, and likely when I gets 'em I'll be so danged enthusiastic over 'em that I'll stick here and ruin my health."

"Gold?" asks Magpie, and Whispering nods.

"You know it. Runs about eighteen per ounce, too. I'd admire to show it to you tomorrow, if yuh ain't got nothing else to do."

"Well," nods Magpie, "I reckon we might as well, Ike. Just because we had our trip today for nothing don't dampen our ardor. Some day we hopes to be mining kings."

"You gents be ready to go over tomorrow, and maybe I can show something mighty good to look at," says Whispering.

They pilgrims back home after uh while, and we thinks it over. Lonesome sort uh limps behind the bar, and takes out that poke.

"How much do you want, Whispering?"

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"I ain't going to pike," announces Whispering. "You can see how Forty fell down with uh small amount, Lonesome. Give me about eight ounces, Lonesome."

Lonesome figures for uh minute and gets tears in his eyes.

"Uh hundred and forty-four dollars!" he wails. "My gosh!"

He weighs out the gold and shoves it across to Whispering.

"Please shoot straight," he implores. "Get up close and don't shut your eyes, Whispering."

"Don't worry. When we pans my rock there ain't going to be no argument. That gold will all be there. I'm going to make an early sneak and be back before nine o'clock."

The next morning Whispering comes in, rubbing his shoulder, and accepts uh jolt.

"Look at my shoulder!" he wails. "Both barrels uh that thing! I put seventy-two dollars in that thing, in each barrel, and she kicked like uh million. I'll bet we'll open their eyes."

When Magpie and Ike shows up, Lonesome treats 'em to some microbe-killer, and they seems anxious to investigate that mine.

"You sure do hunt early, old-timer," states Harper. "Are the fool-hens so wild around here that yuh has to sneak up on 'em in the dark?"

"Why—uh—yes, they—huh—are," stutters Whispering. "Yuh sure got to get out early to have any luck."

WE PILGRIMS to the Yaller Chuck, which looks on uh par with the Golden Glow, and Whispering immediate and soon proceeds to show Magpie the pay streak. He lets Magpie dig out uh pan uh dirt, which we puts in uh canvas sack. There ain't water enough around there to pan it in, so we has to pack it back to uh stream near Painted Post. It sure was some pe-rade. One burro packing uh rocking-chair, and another with uh little sack uh salted dirt. Harper sets down in his rocking-chair, while we sets down at the water's edge.

"If that ain't the richest pan uh dirt you ever seen I hope I never have another drink uh liquor in my life," orates Whispering. "I know what the Yaller Chuck contains."

We squats there on the bank and watches Magpie slosh that pan around, while Ike sets up there on the bank, rocking back and forth, admiring the clouds.

Pretty soon we sees Magpie shake his head, slow-like, and then we clusters around him. Down in the bottom uh that pan is one single piece uh gold that will weigh about ten cents—nothing more.

Whispering heaves uh sigh plumb from his heels, and the next minute him and Lonesome are tangled up in the crick. It takes all of us to pry Lonesome loose, and then explanations seems in order.

"What for kind of uh way is this to act?" asks Magpie, staring at them two dripping critters.

"I'm mad!" snaps Lonesome. "After I lets him——"

"Hold on!" yelps Whispering. "He's just sore at me 'cause—'cause—well, he expected to see more than he has seen. Sabe? He's excitable that way. Dog-gone yuh, Lonesome! Keep your wet paws off me! We can't afford to fight when we got company. Ain't you got no ettiket in your make-up, Lonesome?"

We drifts back to Painted Post and invades Lonesome's place. Magpie and Ike accepts uh drink and goes back to their cabin. Lonesome sets out uh glass for me and one for Forty, and fills one for himself.

"Another glass, Lonesome," suggests Whispering, in uh low tone.

"Nope. You're going to get your wish, Whispering."

"What wish?"

"Uh hope is the same as uh wish, ain't it? Well, you hoped you'd never get another drink uh liquor if that wasn't the richest pan uh dirt he ever seen. Beat me out uh all that gold and then have the nerve to stand up here and drink up my hooch."

"Dang your heart, Lonesome!" explodes Whispering. "Do you mean to insinuate that I stole your gold? Do yuh?"

"Where is it? Where is Forty-Dollar's gold?"

"Well," says Whispering, "all I got to say is this: I don't know what Forty-Dollar done with his, but you can't stand there and accuse me——"

"Peace," says I. "Let's not lower the census. Quit quarreling and do uh little figuring. Them Jaspers have got money, and we got to get some of it. How?"

"I got an idea," suggests Forty-Dollar. "Maybe you fellers don't like violence, but

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it ain't no more of uh sin to take uh man's money at the point of uh gun than it is to get him happy over salted rock and take it that away."

"You keep on talking," says Whispering. "Your oration seems to be leading up to something except words. Go ahead."

"I'm meek and mild and I got quarts of the milk uh human kindness in my veins," continues Forty-Dollar. "I'm an apostle uh brotherly love and sisterly affection, and the sufferings uh mankind makes my heart bleed. But in uh case like this, gentlemen, uh man has to steel his heartstrings and blunt his affections."

"Hymn number five hundred and six," announces Whispering. "Let us all arise."

"Hang on to yourself," advises Forty-Dollar. "I'm excusing my plan as I goes along, so yuh won't see me in the wrong light. Now, them hombres has got money, ain't they? Didn't they mention uh sizable check? Don't they seem to have uh sprinkling of the needful in their pockets? Does human beings dress as them are dressed without having financial backing?

"Do plain, ordinary, burro-busting prospectors carry rocking-chairs, bath-tubs, wash-tubs and kerosene lamps with them? There is but one answer—they don't. I don't aim to hurt uh hair uh their heads.

"Suppose we goes over to their cabin this night: suppose we takes what they got at the point of uh gun: suppose we takes and confiscates their burros and holds them two in fear of destruction until they presents us with uh piece uh paper, which calls for all their worldly goods and chattels. Nobody ever comes to Painted Post. We're supreme, ain't we? Ain't that uh hy-iu scheme, brothers?"

"The ravens fed Elijah," proclaims Lonesome. "The buzzards must uh sent them unto us."

"Amen," says Whispering.

We plans it out right there, and has numerous and sundry jolts to increase our wisdom. There's two windows and one door to this cabin. The windows are the sliding kind and there ain't no lock on the door. We hunts around and finds two flour sacks to put over our heads, so we won't be recognized in case we fails.

Me and Lonesome is to go in the door, while Whispering and Forty are to go in the windows. Long about ten o'clcok we has one last jolt, takes our guns in our hands and starts on our dastardly mission. The cabin is in darkness and so is the whole world. No better night could be picked for the purpose. We sneaks up to the door and listens.

"Sound asleep," whispers Forty. "When we're ready I'll make uh noise like uh bird. Listen to them dude prospectors snore."

Me and Lonesome stands there at the door until we hears Forty whistle, and then we opens the door and slips inside. The door closes behind us, and we're in darkness. We hears Forty and Whispering slide through the windows, and then all of us advances through the gloom.

I'm trusting to luck and instinct that I don't fall over anything, when all to once I runs into something that moves quick, and then my belt-buckle takes uh half-hitch around my spine. Nobody will ever know how hard I got hit. All I know is that I slammed against the side of the cabin right under uh window, but I ain't got ambition enough left to get up and go outside.

ALL seems silent for uh second or two, and then I hears uh grunt and uh crash, and something whirls past me and crumples up in the corner. Uh gun explodes as I gets up, and into me comes the world's champion rough-and-tumble fighter. We has it all over the place.

I runs into something else and gets uh wallop that would kill any heavyweight in the world, but it only serves to crash me back into another foul fighter. There's audible brimstone enough turned loose to blow up the shack, and all to once somebody kicks me when I'm down.

That makes me mad. I gets right up and limps into the thick of it, and got uh punch that sent me spinning plumb out of the door, where I lights into another fighter. We forgot all rules. I been beat up in such an unfair manner that I forget my usual sense uh fair play, I gets my opponent's neck between my teeth, and tries to make him let loose of my ear.

"Curse yuh!" he hisses, sinking his fingers deeper into my ear. "Yuh will kick me in the face, will yuh!"

"Lonesome," says I, letting go of his ear, "you better not curse me."

"My —— !" says he, going limp-like. "Sad Sanderson, is that you?"

"Maybe. I won't swear to it, Lonesome. Don't hold it against me if it ain't. Hold

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on to your complaints until I hear from all the precincts."

We sets there on the ground and braces against each other.

"I reckon they must uh killed Whispering and Forty-Dollar," opines Lonesome, solemn-like.

"I don't know about Forty-Dollar, but they sure killed me," states uh weak voice in the darkness. "I must be dead! No mortal man could get what I got and live. I'm all kicked to ——!"

"Look out!" hisses Lonesome. "Here comes somebody."

We hears the crunch of boot-heels and discerns the bulk of uh man between us and the cabin. He stands there and sighs so audible that it would almost be uh whoop of uh ordinary man.

"Lost!" it wails, in uh thin voice. "I fought everything in the world and in the waters under the world. I don't want no wreath uh glory. I don't want nothing!"

Then he wilts like uh rag.

"You ain't going to get nothing, Forty-Dollar," consoles Lonesome. "You don't deserve nothing—dang yuh!"

Just then the moon peeps out from behind uh cloud, and we sees the shadow of uh mighty pair uh ears on that cabin door.

Hee-e-e-e-e haw-w-w-w-w-w!

"Forty got what he deserved," groans Whispering. "Yuh can't intimidate uh burro in the dark. Yuh simply can't!"

"Nobody around here ever said yuh could, did they!" yelps Lonesome. "Gosh A'mighty, man! Don't argue about something what has been duly demonstrated."

We carries Forty-Dollar up to the saloon, lays him out on the table, and then sets down to rest. We sure are uh sight. I feels that most uh my upholstering has been kicked loose, and the rest of them look that way. Pretty soon Forty-Dollar groans and sets up.

"When I whistle—we'll—all—go—in," he announces, with his eyes shut. "I'm — an — apostle — uh — brotherly — love — and——"

Lonesome has removed his boot, and Forty gets it right in the butt of his ear. He shudders and announces—

"I'm meek—and—mild."

Then he lays down again.

"So am I," I agrees. "Uh little child could lead me. I'm going home and to bed. I'm going to take uh bath in hoss liniment, lay down on my humble couch and let nature take her course. I'm naturally uh honest man, and tonight's underhanded work revolteth my soul. Uh reaction is upon me. Good night."

The next morning we manages to limp up to Lonesome's place. We sure look like the breaking up of uh hard Winter, and there ain't much conversation. After a while Forty-Dollar states, offhand like:

"Them fellers slept in Kelly's old cabin last night. They must uh stabled their burros in Whispering's shack."

"Uh-huh," agrees Whispering, running his hands over the lumps uh his head. "Why say 'must' when it's uh cinch?"

"It wouldn't uh been uh bad scheme—if it worked," opines Forty-Dollar, thoughtful-like. "Can anybody suggest something?"

"I can," says I. "I know where there's uh rattlesnake. Let's all go out there and get bit."

Just then Magpie and Ike comes in. They looks us over, and invites us to have uh drink. We hobbles up to the bar.

"Did my burros bother you fellers any last night?" asks Magpie.

We looks at each other, and then Lonesome stutters—

"Uh—uh—ju-just what do yuh mean?"

"Singing," he explains. "We got four of the kickin'est, singin'est burros on earth. They held uh concert last night, and we was afraid it might disturb yuh."

"Never heard 'em," states Forty-Dollar. He told the truth.

"Fell down uh prospect hole," explains Lonesome, tapping his black eye and the lump on his forehead. "The four of us imbibes uh little too much and on our way home we fell into that hole. Sabe?"

"That's what we heard, Ike," says Magpie. "Did you fellers fire uh gun?"

"Accidental," says Whispering. "Shot in the ground."

"Must uh glanced," remarks Ike. "Bullet went through the ears of our burro."

"Pshaw!" says I. "Must uh glanced."

"This country seems to be pretty barren," opines Magpie. "We ain't seen nothing promising since we came. Ain't there no real mines around here?"

"There's one," says I, getting uh happy inspiration. "There is one, and 'cause it ain't on the market you ain't been told

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about it yet. It's called the Web uh Gold, and while it ain't for sale—every man has his price. She's only been worked enough to show that one person named Sanderson will be ranked with the idle rich some day, unless he gets foolish and sells out."

"Around here?" asks Magpie.

"You pronounced the locality. Free milling to uh startling degree. Like to see it? I ain't trying to sell it to yuh, understand. I just wants your expert opinion. How about tomorrow? It's only about uh mile and uh half from here—west. I ain't much of uh judge, so I'd like to have yuh tell me what yuh think of it. You fellers sure do sabe formations."

"Uh-huh," agrees Harper. "We're experts on them things, and we'd admire to pass judgment on the Web uh Gold."

"I'll meet yuh here tomorrow," says I. "Now, you're going to see uh mine—uh honest to grandma gold mine. Sabe?"

"Well," says Whispering, after they leaves, "they're trusting souls, Slim. What do yuh reckon to do?"

"It's up to Lonesome," says I. "I'm an honest man. You fellers sneaked away alone to do your shooting, but I ain't going to do it thataway. I'm going to take Lonesome along with me, and let him load the gun—and shoot it if he wants to."

"Now you're saying something," applauds Lonesome. "Hereafter I sees where my money goes. How much will we shoot, Slim?"

"Every danged ounce yuh got, Lonesome. We'll give that prospect uh load uh gold. We can't lose. We know it's there, and even if we don't sell we can pan it all out."

"That's uh lot uh gold, but as you say we can't lose, Slim."

"We'll share the same, won't we?" asks Whispering, anxious-like.

"Less the amount yuh shot," states Lonesome, and they nods, satisfied-like.

THE next morning at daylight me and Lonesome pulls out with that shotgun and the poke uh gold. We sneaks up on that alleged mine like uh pair uh burglars, and what we done to that mine was uh plenty. It took eight shots to deplete that poke, and then we pilgrims back for liniment. We sure got punished for our sins.

We finds Whispering and Forty-Dollar waiting for us, and we goes into detail.

"That's the way I wanted to do in the first place," complains Whispering. "I wanted to fill her full uh gold."

"Anybody could sell uh mine salted thataway," says Forty-Dollar. "Lonesome was too stingy with us."

At noon they shows up with uh burro. That danged rocking chair tops the pack, and Magpie pilgrims along in the lead with his hoe like *Little Bo Peep*. We arrives at the mine, and as usual we has uh few speeches before breaking ground.

"Lonesome," says I, "you not being familiar with the ground, I'd deem it uh favor if you'd select uh pan uh dirt."

"Lonesome gets down in the hole and digs right where we filled her full uh wealth. He hands the pan to Magpie, and we all pilgrims to the water. Lonesome took the dirt out of the place where we buried it all, and we know that the result will knock their hats off.

Ike sets on the bank and rocks in his chair, while Magpie squats down at the crick and sloshes that pan. We perches on the bank and grins at each other. It's uh cinch. We don't seem interested, but there ain't one of us but what is prepared to be awful surprised. We watches him deplete that pan uh dirt, and waits for the finish. Pretty soon he looks close-like at the results. He takes out his pocket-knife and digs into the muck. He examines the point of the knife for uh minute and straightens up.

"How does she look, Magpie?" asks Ike.

"Trace," says Magpie. "Bare trace, Ike."

"Trace ——!" yelps Lonesome. "Trace? Let me have that pan!"

The four of us comes to uh common center and grabs the pan. Barren! Not uh sign uh gold. We looks at Magpie, who is looking at the point of his knife, but he only wipes it off on his leg and puts it in his pocket.

"Thought it was uh little color," he explains. "Too small to tell."

Lonesome looks that pan all over and drops it in the crick.

"I reckon we might as well go to some other locality," observes Magpie. "All we've found is uh trace, and uh man can't never get to be uh mining king on traces."

We strings out in single file, four of us limping a heap, and pilgrims back to Painted Post. We ain't talkative uh-tall.

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Magpie and Ike goes over to their cabin to get their other burros, and we enters the saloon once more. We sets down, sort uh tired like, and stares at each other. Pretty soon Lonesome screws up his face and spits plumb across the room.

"——!" says he.

"The same for mine," says I.

Lonesome sets there for uh while, deep in thoughts, and then turns to Forty-Dollar.

"You and Whispering were pikers, Forty—just cheap pikers. Look what me and Slim done. Yeah-h-h-h! Where in —— did that gold go?"

"Aw, don't ask me!" wails Whispering, holding his head in his hands. "Where did my gold go? Where did Forty's gold go?"

Just then that yaller burro, with bullet holes in both ears, sticks his head in the door and yodels another stanza, and in comes the tenderfeet.

"Going away," says Magpie. "Like the place, but not the prospects. I'll buy uh drink. Me and Ike have got to strike it or go to work. We got to eat. Sabe?"

"Haw!" grins Lonesome. "Able to write uh check for fifty thousand, and worrying about starvation. Haw!"

"Anybody can write uh check," grins Magpie, "but they got to have money in the bank or she ain't no good. Me and Ike ain't got no bank account. Sabe?"

"Mister Sanderson, I forgot to ask yuh if yuh got any fool-hens this morning?" says Ike. "I seen you and Mister Larson packing uh gun, and we hears uh lot uh shots."

I looks at Lonesome, and chokes.

"Nope. We're uh pair uh rotten shots—me and Lonesome. Never got uh feather."

"You got any scales?" asks Magpie, leaning against the bar, and feeling inside his shirt.

"Scales?" says Lonesome, absent-like. "Here's some."

He sets the scales out on the bar, and blows his nose on the bar-towel.

"Might as well know how we stand, Ike," grins Magpie, hauling out uh poke. He pours the scale-pan full and checks off the weight. We stands there like dummies and watches him weigh it all out and put it back inside his fancy shirt.

I sees Forty-Dollar feeling of the butt of his six-shooter, but he shakes his head sad-like, and folds his arms.

"How much, Magpie?" asks Ike, reaching for the bottle. "Forty-three and uh half ounces, Ike. You must uh spilled uh little this morning."

Lonesome watches the operation, and stares at Magpie, as he sets down in uh chair and rolls uh cigaret.

"Forty-three and uh half ounces uh—uh—uh—" stutters Lonesome, like uh man half asleep.

"Salt of the earth," pronounces Magpie, settling that hard hat on top of his head, and getting up. "Ike, we might as well be on our way. There ain't nothing here for us."

"Even the fool-hens are shy," grins Ike, and they goes outside, points their burros north, and strings out in single file. We pilgrims back inside the saloon, and sets down in uh sad group.

"Honesty is the best policy," proclaims Whispering, in uh sad voice. "Being crooked don't get yuh nothing."

"Fool-hens is the right word," agrees Forty-Dollar. "We didn't need to hunt 'em, boys. We're uh whole flock unto ourselves. If we'd uh been ——"

Forty's discourse fades out when he seems to get his eyes focused on uh certain spot. We all stares at that spot, which is the chair that Magpie occupied, and which has been partly turned around.

Lonesome starts the rush, and grabs the object to his bosom.

"That poke!" he yelps. "That danged gold poke! He must uh forgot it!"

He dumps the contents on the bar, and with the rush uh yaller metal comes uh folded paper. Whispering grabs the paper, and peers at it, close like.

"Listen!" he whoops. "Listen to this here e-pistle, you fellers: 'To Four Fool-Hens: Gold may be where yuh find it, but no man ever found placer gold in uh quartz ledge, and kept faith in mankind. Also, according to metallurgy, black powder and felt wads do not appear in this formation. Remember this golden rule: if yuh can't be technically crooked, be honest and keep out of jail.' "

Whispering stops reading and looks us over. He folds the paper up and puts it in his pocket.

"I'm still shy four ounces and uh half," reflects Lonesome, and the three of us takes him down and sets on his stummick.

Some folks are salt of the earth, but there are others who will never be anything but fool-hens.

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The SMILER

by ARTHUR JAMES HAYES

Author of "Loot of the Aztec Chief," "The Blue Wolf," etc.

THE man in the gaudy mackinaw had been shielding his face from the wind-driven snow with his hands and he didn't notice the girl until he heard her sharp command—

"Hands up!"

The December gale roaring in from Sugar Lake sent wraiths of frozen snow whirling and dancing along the ridge. The girl's figure, although only twenty feet away, was blurred and misty. But the command was crisply enunciated and the stranger didn't hesitate to obey. Anywhere on the "fringe of things" argument is best conducted after compliance with the initial instruction.

Advancing slowly with the muzzle of the Winchester carbine held level with his chest, the girl stared into the newcomer's face. At the intentness of her scrutiny the stranger smiled. The gun-barrel sagged a few points and the girl's big blue eyes widened in astonishment.

The man in the checked mackinaw was a tall slender chap. Beneath the coonskin cap his hair shone black and crisp, shot with streaks of sheerest white. His countenance was sharp and rather hawklike, but the girl's feminine intuition told her that he was young. His sudden smile softened the hard lines of his face and confirmed her impression. Somehow she was vaguely reminded of storm clouds lifting at sunset.

"I don't think that you'll recognize me," suggested the stranger quietly. "I'm a recent arrival here and my list of acquaintances is restricted to a brakeman on the G. N. & W. and the bartender at Kettle Falls who told me the way to Diamond Hill."

"You're—you're not the one I expected," admitted the girl.

The wind had whipped a vivid red color into her cheeks and under the little round foxskin cap a few golden curls danced in the chill air. But though the rifle muzzle began to weave little circles from her weariness in holding it up, she was not entirely won over.

"Are you very sure," she queried severely, "that you didn't try to rob the rest of my trap-line?"

"Very sure," assented the stranger gravely. "I shouldn't recognize a trap-line if I saw one, and wouldn't want it if I were astute enough to know it when seen. What made you think I had designs on it?"

"Some one has," explained the girl wearily. "I lost a beautiful otter yesterday and three mink. To-day—I—I'm just sure that I lost the black fox. The trap was sprung and the snow-shoe tracks led down the trail away from it. I worked awfully hard for that one."

She was very young and very pretty and the plaintive note in her voice convinced

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the man that he was not mistaken in thinking he saw tears in her eyes. The lean countenance set grimly.

"I take it that black foxes are reasonably scarce then," he ventured.

He thrust his hands into his coat pockets and stood with his legs wide apart staring down into the girl's face. She had lowered her rifle and was standing in the shelter of a young spruce tree.

"Scarce!" she echoed. "Why, there aren't three caught on this side of the line in a year! Even on the Canadian side they are rareties."

"And being scarce," the stranger persisted, "they are naturally exceedingly valuable. What were you going to do with it?"

"The pelt was going into—into my school fund."

The man seemed to understand.

"On the outside, of course," he suggested.

The girl nodded.

"Dad says that he can't teach me any more here. He wants me to have the education and manners of a lady. He hoped to complete the school fund himself. But he's sick all of the time, and can't trap himself. He worried so that I said I could walk the line myself. And now somebody's been systematically robbing my traps. It's awfully discouraging."

The tears were trickling down the pink cheeks now and the girl dabbed at the long-lashed eyes with her little red mittens. The man said something under his breath and turned to stare down the back trail.

"It occurs to me," he said abruptly, "that I passed a tall scar-faced individual on the back trail about fifteen minutes ago. He had snow-shoes, wherefore I envied him, and a bulky object on his shoulder that was too snow-smeared for ready identification. But it might have been your fox and I'll just satisfy my curiosity by sauntering back that way. Where do you live?"

"I'm sure it was Jack the Horse," cried the girl eagerly.

Then her glance rested upon the man in the trail and her expression changed.

"He's got a bad name in these parts. You never could get it away from him—without a gun."

"I've a hunch it can be done," declared the stranger easily. And before she could make further remonstrance or even answer his last question, he was striding briskly down the trail.

DOWN in the Blue Moon an admiring concourse of lumberjacks and half-breeds had gathered about Jack the Horse. The big trapper stroked the sleek pelt of a silver fox proudly and let his little beady eyes rove over the throng.

"See," he proclaimed triumphantly, "zee Manitou black fox. T'ree 'undred dollaire, alright. Mebbe four. Ol' Jack, he don' lose out nevaire, when hees go fer catch ze fur!"

He threw the dead fox across the bar and called for drinks for the crowd. The big half-breed towered head and shoulders over those who crowded so eagerly up to the bar. His bulk had won for him the sobriquet of "The Horse" and between Tower and Rainy Lake his ready truculence and craftiness had made his name no less feared than hated. Wherever he held forth upon his own many merits there was a throng of satellites to fawn and admire. Those who didn't like him held it just as convenient to mask their sentiments.

Charlie Hillis, the game-warden, had dared arrest him for illegal possession of moosemeat and a month later was found in the bottom of his canoe going 'round and 'round in an eddy of Kettle Rapids. There was a bullet hole in the warden's back. Sometimes when drunk enough Jack the Horse made boasting allusion to that mystery. Other wardens left him alone. Men still recount the savagery of some of his more notable fights. But the stranger was not expected to know all that.

"Eet teks one —— fine trappaire fer get those bleck fox," he declared. "Hee's smart lak dose wolf, an' how many wolf trap in one season? Only t'ree—four mebbeso. But Jack zee Horse—he gettum. Jus' so long as wan come 'round zee countree, hees mek for——"

"You certainly hate yourself," drawled a voice from the doorway. "It's positively pathetic the way you disapprove of your own exploits."

The crowd shifted to obtain a view of the newcomer. They saw a man attired in one of the rainbow-colored mackinaws much affected by college boys and professional ski-jumpers. His corduroy trousers and top-boots were new and distinctive in design. His hat was of genuine coonskin and his hands were encased in fringed motoring gauntlets. Some of the throng snickered at the rather obvious "staginess" of the costume.

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But the stranger's level gaze seemed to dissipate the humor in the situation. His eyes were deep-set and about the color of glare-ice. The pupils were the tiniest of pinpoints and the lean tanned countenance was set in tense lines. He returned stare for stare and the battery of curious eyes began to waver and grow intent upon new charms in the sawdust floor and garish wall lithographs.

As he finished speaking he walked casually into the group and picked up the fox. He dusted the melting snow from the shimmering pelt with one gauntlet and directed his steady gaze upon Jack the Horse.

"I met a young lady a little while back," he explained gently, "who regretted that a scar-faced thieving four-flusher had ambled off with a fox that she had been at a lot of pains to trap. Not being extensively acquainted in these parts, I had to look up the only party I've seen trundling a fox pelt around with him. But I understand they're mighty scarce so I'm backing my play to the limit."

Fifty men were crowded around the pair by the time the newcomer had concluded his observations. His voice had a way of carrying without climbing up in pitch, and the contemptuous inflection had attracted everybody in the place to the scene. From the partitioned dance-hall in the rear the girls emerged with sundry of their admirers. Their brilliant dresses and rouged cheeks added a vivid color to the scene.

Jack the Horse had won the designation on the strength of his size only. It had never been demonstrated that he had any of the horse tribe's good qualities. But beside him the slender stranger seemed like a toy man. There ensued the tense pregnant stillness that broods over a situation when there has been an accident or a couple of real gun-fighters draw.

One of May Hartley's blonde beauties remarked in a carrying voice to her trapper friend:

"He's a pretty boy, but he's sure set himself to be all mussed up. Go get him, Jack!"

The half-breed didn't need the encouragement.

"You say I stole those black fox," he roared. "You tell I stole eet, eh?"

He shouldered over until he stood actually touching the stranger. That blustering approach had long been part of his mode of intimidation. He seemed to hold that it made his opponent better sense his bulk and brawn.

"You b'leeve that —— girl know——"

The stranger's left fist shot up quite gently. It wasn't the kind of blow the story-writers delight in. It didn't send the blustering trapper sprawling twenty feet away. The half-breed's head tipped back abruptly and his rabbitskin cap fell off. The stranger had clipped him neatly enough on the point of the jaw. And having accomplished that he seemed content to stand there waiting.

Then the larger man's head sagged forward again. He swayed suddenly, his knees wabbled and he crumpled up like a collapsible yardstick. The girls gasped audibly and the rest of the throng swore amazedly in a number of tongues and dialects.

The stranger turned away from the prostrate man and the circle parted hastily to give him passage. He threw the fox across the bar and slowly drew on his other gauntlet. While he did so he glanced over the wonder-stricken crowd—and smiled. Then and there he acquired the only name he was ever known by—at least by any one save the girl. The menacing hawklike harshness faded out of his face and he became in a trice just a candid, trusting boy, pleading with the sunniest grin on earth for ordinary decent treatment.

"Chicago Mag" Halloran detached herself from the throng and sauntered over.

"Slip it, kid," she congratulated. "You sure lug the most convincing sleep slap I've ever seen—and I knew a lot of the good boys!"

The "Smiler's" chilly pale-gray eyes took a leisurely survey of the girl. They didn't seem to notice the proffered hand. He bowed and said very curtly—

"Thank you."

Then he turned away and threw the fox over his shoulder.

Underneath the garish cosmetics the girl's face went white. Her little teeth set sharply and her blue eyes narrowed. The rebuff was so positive that no one missed it. It created a general hostility toward the stranger. Not on the girl's behalf. In fact if the snub had been more crudely administered the gaping circle would have laughed and enjoyed it. That is the way of dance-halls. But instead, the frosty reserve

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spelled "caste" and the riffraff of the out-of-the-way places rail against caste with a blind and unremitting hatred.

At the door he turned.

"Some of you," he said very slowly, "will confer a favor by telling our boasting friend that he's an otter pelt and two or three mink skins shy on the total inventory. He knows where to leave them. I'll interest myself in seeing that he doesn't suffer from absent-mindedness."

UP AT a little cabin on Manitou Ridge he knocked at the tar-papered door. The girl opened it for him. She was attired in a little blue dress that Father Montraine had brought her from town. Her reddish-gold hair hung over her shoulders, contrasting sharply with the blue eyes and pink cheeks, and making her appear very young. Her startled gaze shifted from the lean face to the shimmering pelt of the fox.

"Oh you've got it," she cried, "you've got my school-fund fox. Did he—did he give it to you?"

The Smiler nodded soberly.

"He was very decent about it," he said. "I don't think he said a word as I left with it. I guess he didn't understand about the school fund."

"Well," said the girl with a sigh of relief, "I'm glad he does now. I just worried and worried all afternoon. And so did dad. He wanted to go after it himself. Of course I wouldn't let him."

The Smiler's quick glance encompassed every object in the little cabin. It was very neat and clean. There was a bunk at one end of the room, and the opposite corner was draped off with a red gingham curtain. On the walls were pictures clipped from magazines and newspapers and several sketches on birch-bark which he assumed were the work of the girl.

In front of the roaring stove, shrouded in a red blanket until only his gray head was visible, sat the girl's father. His cheek-bones bore the hectic flush that is the sign manual of the Dread Destroyer. He shifted his lack-luster gaze from the red sides of the roaring stove as the girl spoke his name.

"Dad," she said, "I want you to meet the gentleman who brought back my fox pelt."

The sick man extended his wasted hand.

"I'm glad to meet you, Mr. ——"

"Gordon," supplemented the Smiler quietly.

"I'm glad to meet you, Mr. Gordon. The little girl has no end of trouble with her trap-line. She tells me that I'll be able to take it over next year. But of course I know better. That's why I hate to see them stealing her pelts."

They wouldn't let the Smiler leave until morning. Over the supper-table his sharp scrutiny lingered longest on the golden hair and the gray. The old man was manifestly nearing the end. In his watery eyes was the hopeless stare of the failure, the beaten look that comes ultimately to the faces of the unfit and the incompetent.

Afterward the old man and the Smiler sat together smoking, while the girl washed and dried the dishes. As a guest, the stranger was not permitted to help. When the girl had retired behind the red curtain, the sick man confided to the Smiler his hopes and fears.

"If Celeste could only get a year or two at school," he said, "I figure that she could look out for herself. We came here when she was only eight. That's nearly ten years ago, I never was much good myself. I made a mess of things back home—that's why we live up here like exiles. Her mother died shortly after we came. I haven't told Celeste of course, but it was just a broken heart. She couldn't bear the disgrace of the bank failure.

"I've made a shift to trap a little. That with guiding and letter-writing fees and giving the homesteaders a little legal advice now and then, has kept us from starving. But I won't see Spring again. And I nearly go mad with helpless rage when the little girl's traps are tampered with. The line is eight miles long, but she makes it every day except Sundays. It's rough work for a woman, all alone that way, with the wolves and the cold and the scum that drift up into pine country."

His voice trailed off into silence.

"I'm banking on a job at the Diamond Hill camps," said the Smiler. "They tell me that's only five miles from here. I'll try to give the little lass a lift on her trap-line now and then."

Chester Lonergan extended his hand. There were tears in his faded eyes. The Smiler gripped it quick and hard and then while the clock ticked loudly on the mantel and the wind roared in the pines, they sat

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very silent, staring at the lurid sides of the vibrating stove.

JACK KERENS, veteran lumberman and chief factotum of the Diamond Hill outfit favored the Smiler with a very deliberate scrutiny.

"Ever done any woods work?" he snapped.

"No," responded the applicant for a job.

"Well," said the old logger, "I'll put you at swamping for the time being. If you keep your eyes open maybe you'll get a crack at foreman 'fore long."

He hadn't heard about the Black Fox incident. The Smiler was assigned a bunk and given a swamper's ax. He worked hard and silently. When the evening meal was over he drew himself a little apart from the chattering crowd in the bunk-house, and read month-old magazines and newspapers. One or two of the men, sensing his newness and unfamiliarity with things, essayed to perpetrate ponderous jokes at his expense.

But the chill gray eyes, turned upon them suddenly, seemed to bore into their very souls. The jokers quailed before the frosty scrutiny and the savor in the witticisms went flat in their mouths. Two or three days later Kerens summoned him to the little log structure dignified as "the office."

"You're promoted," he said bruskly. "Henceforth you're assistant foreman at eighty-five bucks, and if anybody in your gang doubts it, slip 'em what you handed Jack the Horse."

The Smiler was a success as a foreman. He had a faculty for getting the best efforts out of men without bluster or threats. And his ability to appear at opportune moments seemed to savor of the uncanny. No one knew at what skidway he would appear next. The time-honored lumberjack practise of "playing it slack" in the foreman's absence lost its vogue that Winter at Diamond Hill.

On Sundays he made the trap-line with the girl. The frozen creeks with the tiny trails up and down the banks fascinated him. He answered the young girl's eager questions about the outside world and in turn learned the secrets of placing the traps so that the wary mink and alert otter would succumb to the lure of the bait. He listened to her innocent chatter, marveling that one so slender and youthful could negotiate the miles of deep, soggy snow better than he could himself.

She told him with her gurgling laugh that she had found on her doorstep a packet of furs. It contained three mink skins and an otter pelt, all peeled and stretched with consummate skill. It meant a substantial addition to the school fund. And she was tremendously obliged to Jack the Horse for his change of heart.

But in the big half-breed's soul, the confession of weakness rankled. He encountered the girl one crisp January morning, on lower Manitou. His loose lips writhed into the semblance of a smile. Celeste Lonergan sought to pass him, but he contrived to place his huge bulk between her and the fork.

"Don' mek for moosh so fas'," he wheedled. "Mebbeso ze pretty squaw weel tell ol' Jack how mek ze fine trap for catchem otter, eh?"

The girl's wind-whipped cheeks paled. The big half-breed, his pig-like eyes gleaming evilly, played up his advantage. The fork was a good three miles from the nearest homesteader's cabin. She was unarmed. And the sinister presence in front of her, his breath heavy with cheap whisky, was becoming rapidly emboldened.

"Let me pass," she demanded, in a voice that trembled slightly. "I don't want to talk to you."

"But Jack, he wan' fer talk," insisted the big trapper. "He's goin' fer say——"

Then his gaze lifted from the frightened blue eyes. His jaw sagged and his mumbling speech died in inarticulate gurgles. Back of the girl, at the bend in the trail, stood the Smiler. His hands were thrust deep in his mackinaw pockets and his feet were spread wide apart in his favorite poise.

Now his heels clicked together with military precision. His hands came to his sides.

"I followed you," he said to the half-breed, "when I saw you taking the left fork at Sugar Lake. I rather suspected that you didn't have any legitimate business up on the ridge. Now you're hitting the trail north. You will not be seen in these parts again until the ice goes out. If you are, I'll kill you—with my hands!"

Together they watched the hulking figure shuffling up the trail until the pines obscured him from view. Then the girl turned to the Smiler. She proffered her little mittened hand shyly.

"I don't know what I'd do without you, Smiler," she declared with a catch in her voice. "You just show up at the most

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necessary times like the spirit of Aladdin's lamp!"

"I was coming into town anyway," he explained. "It was lucky I came along when I did. Where's your gun?"

She smiled ruefully.

"It's too heavy to carry around," she declared. "I didn't think it necessary."

The Smiler's chill eyes focused upon her with sudden sharpness.

"I'll expect you to have a weapon with you always, after this," he declared.

He thrust a short blue automatic into her hand.

"You're too young and pretty to run loose without protection. Don't let me ever discover you on the trail without it!"

They had made the trap circuit several times together. He had told her about the outside and she had told him about her life in the wilds. They were very good friends.

"What would you do if—if I didn't have it with me?" she inquired roguishly.

"I should very probably spank you," said the Smiler. And he didn't smile.

"Golly," gasped the very pink-cheeked trapper of fox, "I—I guess you mean it!" And thenceforth she traveled armed.

BOBBIE McDEVITT made his initial appearance at Diamond Hill shortly after that. He was a young cub of twenty-two or three, chock-full of college anecdotes and sporting chatter. He was cursed with a rather cherubic countenance and curly black hair. Kerens profanely proclaimed him an infant in arms and damned the effete Eastern idea that you could transform a young devil into a steady business head by shipping him out for a season in the timber. But he assigned the son of the president of the company to the most menial task in camp and sat back in glowering expectancy that he would protest.

Score one for young McDevitt. He didn't. The labors of a cookee are arduous and unromantic. He is a chopper of firewood and a drawer of water. At noon he must needs harness the camp's pension horse into the little single sleigh and make the rounds of the skidways with the dinner-pails. He must bear the rough wit of the lumberjacks stoically and the frost-laden winds with Spartan fortitude.

Bobbie McDevitt grinned cheerfully through it all. He loathed the dishwashing with all the ardor of his soul and said so. But Kerens sternly reminded him that his father wanted him to work, not loaf. The lad pleaded for a job requiring more muscle and less housekeeping talent. The manager of the Diamond Hill Company was obdurate. He would be promoted, he said, solely on merit.

The Smiler noted his attitude approvingly. He engaged the boy in conversation, and the son of the lumber king narrated the exploits that led to his summary expulsion from college and his banishment in disgrace. The Smiler proved capable of discussing football, military tactics and English literature, the younger man's pet themes. It cemented the bonds of friendship. But the lean-faced man skilfully parried all the boy's questions pertaining to his past. And the heir to the McDevitt millions soon gave up the quest.

He was down in the Blue Moon one night when the Smiler sauntered in. Opposite Bobbie McDevitt at the tiny table in the curtained alcove sat Chicago Mag. The girl was listening very intently to his conversation. On the table were two small glasses and a square green bottle. Bobbie's cheeks were even redder than usual and his speech was rather thick and uncertain. One hand was resting upon the girl's white arm.

The Smiler stepped into the booth. His chill gaze, menacing as a cobra's, rested momentarily on the girl. Then he turned to the lad.

"Better trek, Bobbie," he suggested gently. "We roll out awfully early you know."

Young McDevitt stared at him rather stupidly.

"I say," he protested, "we only get out once a week. Stick around a while." He thrust the green bottle over toward the Smiler. "Have one on me," he urged.

"Thanks," he said. "I'm not drinking."

Chicago Mag lifted her prominent hard eyes to the newcomer's countenance.

"Better trot along then," she snapped. "You ain't exactly an invitation guest to this little gathering.

"I'd be awfully insulted by the suggestion," said the Smiler, genially.

Then his hand dropped lightly on the boy's shoulder.

"Come on, Bobbie," he said crisply. "The tote-team is pulling out."

The still, intense gaze seemed to sober

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the boy. He rose unsteadily to his feet.

"S'long," he said to his *vis-à-vis*. "Drop in again next week."

The hard-eyed siren was specially attired the next Saturday evening. Her round arms glittered with jewels and the wide eyes were pencilled with exquisite care. But Bobbie didn't put in an appearance. He was some miles away on Manitou Ridge playing checkers with the other girl.

"You're lonesome, Bobbie," the Smiler had said as they rode through the still aisles of frost-rimmed pines. "And when a fellow's lonesome and homesick, the one dependable antidote is a girl. But that girl ought to be a good girl. There's the prettiest little lass you ever saw, right back here on Manitou. Her dad's dying and she's pretty lonesome at times. She's never known a regular guy, either."

After that Bobbie McDevitt was a frequent caller at the cabin. The pension horse found an addition to his daily route marked only by the distinction that there was no delivery of dinner-pails. With the gold and black hair very close together over the narrow table, they calculated the actual and potential magnitude of the school fund.

Bobbie McDevitt even had the school picked out. It was right near his home and Celeste could visit with his sister for week-ends. The trap route seemed strangely shorter now. Young McDevitt even suggested additional territory. Together they carried their offensive into the Sunrise Swamp country. The Smiler stuck closer to camp. He had found an eager proxy for the guardianship of the golden-haired girl on Manitou.

DOWN in a curtained alcove in the dance-hall of the Blue Moon, Chicago Mag and Billy Fitzgerald held consultation. Billy and the girl had plotted aforetime. The hulking proprietor of the place had a certain genius in illicit scheming. He had early marked the new cookee of the Diamond Hill headquarters camps as a worth-while victim.

"The kid would have been fish, too," declared the girl bitterly, "if it hadn't been for that—— Smiler. Now he's all enthused over that brat of Lonergan's. It sure would have been pickin's."

She drummed the table disconsolately and frowned.

"It just about stacks that way," assented Fitzgerald gloomily. "Lonesome an' away from home an' all that, he should have been easy. If we could have got you an' him hooked up, we would have stung his folks something han'some. Kerens told some of the boys that the old man was worth five million. And they'd have settled too, rather than scare up publicity."

He poured a brimming glass of brandy.

"Maybe if we can get the kid in here again, we can frame to have him sign something. It's worth trying. I figure that the game is just about through in these parts. The Diamond Hill crowd'll be pullin' spikes in the Spring."

Chicago Mag nodded.

"Anything's better than no try," she agreed. "He's a fool with a drink in!"

THE January pay-off saw the throngs of lumberjacks pouring into town. The Blue Moon and the Lumberjack's Lodge were crowded to the doors with drinking, cheering woodsmen. It is a peculiarity of Jack-in-town that his monthly spree must be appropriately noisy. The crisp, still, moonlit air carried the sounds of revelry for a mile or more. An occasional shot fired into the sky by some late-arriving roisterer carried with crackling sharpness far over the frozen surface of Sugar Lake.

The Diamond Hill tote-teams were laden with incoming lumberjacks. Kerens viewed the monthly blowouts as a necessary evil. Restraint only meant that the disgruntled crews would "jump the job" entirely, leaving the camps short-handed until more men could be rushed up from below. Kerens himself, Larson the foreman and the Smiler accompanied the crowd. The Silver Lake people paid off on the same day and the little settlement was already preempted by Silver Lake men, drunk and wild and readily truculent.

The chances of trouble were, as Kerens phrased it, "damnably favorable." For between the Diamond Hill and the Silver Lake companies existed a feud of long standing. It was a tradition of the respective outfits and its origin had outlasted all of the pioneers in the difficulty save gray-headed old Dan Mallory and two or three other veterans.

Dan could and did narrate with gusto the inception of the thing.

"We was workin' the northeast of

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section sivinteen," he said. "It was Diamond Hill timber bought and paid for by ol' man McDevitt, but the thavin' Silver Lake crowd contisted the fac'. They filed injunctions and sent cruisers out to scale our cuttin'. Bemidji Benson was camp foreman o' our outfit at the time and a wild Swede he was. He tould us to go ahead an' log sivinteen regardless.

"We did. 'Saginaw' Casper o' Silver Lake brought his gang of plug-uglies over and dared us to go on. It was a battle to rejice the hear-rt of a man. Cant-hooks an' peaveys an' spruce stakes an' no holds barred.

"We cleared that forty o' underbrush just in the coorse av the mill. An' when the last Silver Lake jack was down an' beggin' for mercy, we knocked off as a day's wooruk. McDevitt was here himself in those days. 'It's a vi'lation o' law and order,' he says to us, ragin' like. 'Yer all liable to imprisonment for contimpt av coort. I niver heard the likes,' he says.

"An' thin his gray eyes twinkled and he sinds into D'luth for wan hundred turkeys an' tin barrels of cranberries for the outfit. And when their domned injunction comes up in coort it's thrown out. So that was the start. An' Diamond Hill wins all around. But whenever you get licker in the two crowds, after these twelve years, and steer 'em into the same neighborhood, it's a reg'lar 'Donnybrook' yc'll be havin'!"

Something of the same idea was uppermost in Kerens' mind.

"There's nothing like a traditional grievance among sailors, cowpunchers or lumberjacks," he remarked to the Smiler. "For their forty bucks an' found, the boys will turn out and battle themselves blind for their outfit. I've never been able to determine whether it's actual loyalty or just love of trouble. But there are feuds up in these parts—survivals of the old days of plundered Government timber and strong-arm competition between companies—that men have given each other the boots over for thirty years.

"The present generation of lumbermen don't know what it's all about, of course. But get them full of rotgut and they won't hold any inquiry as to the facts. They don't seem to be a bit embarrassed by their ignorance either. They just naturally amalgamate like a couple of strange bulldogs."

Bobbie McDevitt, huddled up in the hay just behind them, listened with gleaming eyes. A real good old shindy, he thought, would be replete with that color and picturesqueness that his romance-loving nature craved. It was like the things one reads about in fiction.

The Blue Moon appeared to enjoy a preference among those who had preceded the Diamond Hill crowd into town. Patronage alternated more or less erratically between the Lumberjack's Lodge and Fitzgerald's abode of iniquity. The latter was the more picturesque structure and typical of the now vanished pinewoods saloon and dance-hall.

It was a long, massive log building, with tiny diamond-pane windows and a roof of inch boards covered with tar-paper. In front of it hung a canvas sign, the handiwork of some itinerant artist. It depicted a crescent moon of an unearthly purple tint beaming down upon a red-bearded lumberjack who regarded it with the rapt delight that booze and ragtime music are ever calculated to instil into the woodsman's trusting soul.

As to technic—may the mantle of charity drape the painting and the subsequent effect of the lantern illumination! But Dan Mallory stoutly upheld its artistic merit.

"When the moon looks red and the lumberjack is plainly percaved to be dancin' a hornpipe," he declared solemnly, "I allus know that I've had enough. 'Tis miny a man's barometer in the same fashion. Pete Malone, f'rinstance, won't go home until he sees the moon with whiskers and the lumberjack without 'em."

There ensued a general rush for the Lumberjack's Lodge. Fifty men clamored with one voice for the honor of the first round. Four bartenders set out bottles and glasses and raked in bills and coin with magic agility. Theirs was the art of making each one of five or six different woodsmen believe that he and none other had the honor of setting up that round. Mallory proposed cheers for Kerens which were given with a will. Some one suggested the Smiler and the fifty whisky-laden voices made the rafters of the Lodge ring again.

The manager and assistant foreman were spared the embarrassment of being present. They were deep in a file of papers and reports up at the Diamond Hill town office

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at the north end of the single thoroughfare. Bobbie McDevitt after watching the checking-up process listlessly sauntered out.

The effusive good-will of the half-intoxicated woodsman is eclipsed only by his blind vindictiveness in the same state of beatitude. Young McDevitt's entrance into the Lumberjack's Lodge was the signal for another demonstration. Men rallied around him to assure him repeatedly that their friendship and esteem would dog him to the grave. There is a subtle flattery to youthful ears in the attention of older men, whatever their station or antecedents.

Bobbie McDevitt drank responsive toasts. He set 'em up himself. He made an impromptu speech from the bar. And from his own lips fell the fatal suggestion that the gang turn out and "give the Blue Moon the once over." With a mighty whoop the crowd poured out and across the street.

Billy Fitzgerald behind the barred opening labelled "Cashier's Window"—a sacred institution in the days when the boys from the timber cashed their time-checks in town for three-fifths value, and that often computed in "twin-edged" paper—was somewhat startled by the sudden influx of mackinaw-clad figures. The sudden patronage from the competition bar was not—even in Fitzgerald's eyes—an unmixed blessing.

Already the larger building held more than a hundred Silver Lake men. They too had run the gamut of boisterous emotion. The newcomers ranged themselves along the bar, not at all averse to jostling the men whose positions they preempted. A silence descended upon the Silver Lake throng. There was no noisy exchange of greetings, nor was there, indeed, even the ponderous repartee that usually paves the way to developments between representatives of rival camps.

Diamond Hill drank—and Dan Mallory's piping voice was raised to the success of the best crowd on earth. Diamond Hill whooped. "Chuck" Sanderson toasted "Section Seventeen an' the northeast forty." His companions went into ecstasies. From the cohorts of Silver Lake, crowded in a dense mass at the farther side of the room, there rose a low murmur.

Then out of the crowd came a slender, handsome girl in a blue silk dress. She sauntered along the throng at the bar until she came to Bobbie McDevitt. Then she placed a slender arm across his shoulder.

"Hello, boy," she cried cheerfully and with what might have been detected as excessive friendliness. "You're quite a stranger."

Bobbie's cheeks were flushed and his speech was thick and comprehension dawned but slowly in his eyes. Then the candor that is of youth and liquor framed his response.

"That's deucedly bad taste you know," he reproved gravely. "And please don't presume to know me so well. It's really rather annoying."

To the admiring Chuck Sanderson that retort seemed to be the acme of scintillant cleverness. He guffawed. Loyally emulative, the rest of the throng did likewise. The girl flushed and her nails pressed sharply into the palms of her hands. "Buck" Logan, straw-boss of the Silver Lake outfit and loyal slave to feminine beauty wherever found, strode over.

"See here, sis," he said, "if this young pup ain't got no manners there's plenty o' us here just achin' to learn him some. He needn't think that because he's a college dude from the East that——"

Melting snow had made the floor slippery. And Logan didn't expect it. So when Bobbie McDevitt hit him his gyrations were such as to fill the souls of all Diamond Hill spectators with exceeding joy. Then Silver Lake called the turn. Theirs was the actual advantage.

The mad rush had enveloped the Diamond Hill men before their dazed minds had grasped the situation. And they were outnumbered more than two to one. Half the number went down before the first onslaught to be booted and trampled into quiescence. The remainder, led by Bobbie McDevitt and the gray-headed but stout-hearted Mallory, leaped loyally into the fray.

Chairs and bottles flew through the air. Fists and furniture wrought sad havoc in the beleaguered and thinning ranks of Diamond Hill. Bobbie's flailing fists battered red, rage-distorted faces that rose like waves in front of him and pressed inexorably on. Chuck Sanderson fought like a man possessed and Mallory and Evans and Railton battled with demon fury.

Little Johnnie Carowski, squat and muscle-bound, hedged off into hostile territory

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by the first rush, swung a chair with such hearty vigor that half a dozen intrepid Silver Lake antagonists went down before one of the more wary struck the little Pole with an empty square-faced bottle from the rear.

In the street other men from both factions rallied to enter. But the heavy front door had swung to, and by accident or design the big steel bolts were shot. Two or three of the more venturesome sought entrance by forcing the diamond-pane windows. But these were small, and Silver Lake men from within, wielding peavey handles, made that method of approach hopeless.

Within there was less pandemonium now and more intense fighting. Mallory had gone down and Bobbie's blurring gaze could not locate the lion-hearted Sanderson. Behind the bar Fitzgerald and his white-aproned assistants amused themselves by hurling empty bottles at the hard-pressed remnants of the Diamond Hill gang. A huge Swede had grasped Bobbie around the waist and was crushing the breath from his lungs, oblivious to the lad's battering blows upon his face.

UP AT the Diamond Hill office the door suddenly burst open. Celeste Lonergan, breathless from haste and terror, sprang into the room.

"Oh, Smiler," she cried, "there's an awful fight down at the Blue Moon. The Silver Lake crowd are killing Bobbie and his gang!"

The Smiler didn't answer. But the next moment he was running down the street with Kerens at his heels. He thrust his weight against the door, but the stout boards wouldn't yield. There didn't seem to be an ax available. The little windows invited destruction. He stared about him for a moment. Then he was clambering up the log jointures at the corner of the building. In a moment he stood limned against the green night sky.

With a single kick he sent the rusty iron stovepipe flying. Then he bent and ripped off the tin drain-sheet. An inch board creaked and yielded under his powerful jerking. It sailed down into the snow. A second followed. With a wild whoop the Smiler leaped through the opening in the roof.

His hob-nailed boots landed fairly on the head of Bobbie's assailant and the boy found himself miraculously released. The Smiler was sober and his pale eyes shone like sunlight on glare-ice.

His fists shot out like twin pistons, never missing their mark, never requiring a repeat. Men went down before him in windrows and still he pressed on. The few Diamond Hill men still on their feet applauded his entry with a feeble shout and turned to with renewed vigor. The Smiler detected Fitzgerald in his bottle-throwing sport. He placed one hand upon the bar and vaulted it neatly. Then his fist found Fitz's jaw and the proprietor of the Blue Moon lost interest.

A white-aproned confederate essayed to flee, but the Smiler picked him up and hurled him into the struggling mass. A man went down with him and stayed down. It was Buck Logan. Kerens came down through the roof, followed by the loyal Rutledge, Johnson and Cahill. So small a reinforcement turned the tide of battle. The last oil lamp fell shattered, and the fight raged in darkness.

A revolver flashed several times and its brief intermittent flares found the Smiler swinging a three-legged stool about him, Indian-club fashion. Kerens with another chair was backing his play with precision. The fear of that fury who fought so unerringly in utter darkness gripped at the hearts of the men from Silver Lake. To them it was something abnormal, something savoring of the demoniac!

Some one unlatched the door. The throng poured out into the street. Within a match was struck. The Diamond Hill men looked at each other. Save for those who were striving feebly to rise, they were alone. Bobbie McDevitt, his clothes half torn from him, his supple young body gleaming with blood and perspiration, staggered over to the Smiler.

"Smiler, old man," he gasped, "you certainly turned the trick. Another minute and it would have been all over."

Eager volunteers brought lighted lanterns from the tote-sleighs. Their mellow light revealed the full interior of the wrecked Blue Moon. It disclosed Dan Mallory with blood in his gray hair, swaying against the bar. It also revealed the slender figure of the Smiler, whose face was growing white while his checked mackinaw grew red. The pale eyes gleamed with the old indomitable spirit. He clasped the boy's hand.

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"Bobbie," he gasped, "I guess it's up to you to look after the little girl—and the school fund. Don't betray that trust, my boy. All she's got in the world is a dying 'lunger' and a fox pelt—and you!"

Then the flame seemed to die out of those chill glare-ice eyes. The Smiler crumpled up as Jack the Horse had done weeks before.

"Smiler," cried Celeste, "Smiler—it—it isn't Bobbie—you know—it—it was you all the time! I—I was hoping—that you cared!"

The Smiler's palsied hand reached out and reverently touched the girl's golden curls.

"It couldn't have been that, little girl," he said gently. "You don't understand. You see, I could never go back. But Bobbie will look after you—and the school fund—always!"

He smiled, and there was a softer light in those chill eyes. The girl and the boy knelt beside him, clutching his hands and crying softly. Over in the corner another girl in a blue silk dress fingered an empty pearl-handled revolver and whimpered weakly. One by one men stole off into the darkness that their friends might not see their faces twitching. For the Smiler had faced the long shadows—smiling.

Kerens it was who found the little silver case with the real address in the Smiler's meager effects. And it was Kerens who coughed so much and rubbed his eyes and damned their dimness in old age, while writing the letter East.

AND two years afterward, when the muskeg carpet was thick and green over the graves of the Smiler and the girl's father, Kerens got a letter from the East. It was a stiff thick affair and in the usual formal phraseology announced the marriage of Celeste Estelle Lonergan to Robert Stanton McDevitt.

It contained other things too. A note in the girl's dainty hand and a brief newspaper clipping, all smudged and smeared as if it had been cried over a good deal. Kerens read it through at brief intervals all day. Then at sunrise the next morning he started up the old trail to Manitou Ridge. He carried a little silk American flag. Because it was Decoration Day and also because the newspaper clipping had explained a lot of things, it seemed appropriate.

In the sunflecked shadows of the spruce thicket he placed the flag on the grave. Then he sat down on a tamarack log and read the clipping through again, while the silent Canada jays flitted back and forth like slate-gray shadows.

The recent discovery of the original draft of the Cavite plans in the personal effects of Major Keithcourt, U. S. A., Retired, recently deceased, clears up an Army mystery of several years' standing. Relatives and friends of the dead officer are of the opinion that the plans were inadvertently included in his private papers when he returned from Philippine service.

When inquiry was instituted at the time, suspicion was fastened upon a young captain of coast artillery, Edward E. Spaulding, who quit the service under a cloud after an inconclusive court-martial verdict of "Charges not established." Rumor rife in military circles was to the effect that the unfortunate young officer had disposed of the original draft of the fortifications to an interested foreign power. The tardy exoneration has its own note of tragedy in the fact that Captain Edward E. Spaulding died somewhere in the North woods two years ago, still under the stigma of unfounded suspicion.

It was very quiet in the spruce thicket on Manitou. There was a far-away look in Jack Kerens' eyes. He was staring regretfully down the back trail of time.

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HIDDEN TRAILS

A FIVE-PART STORY
Part IV

by WILLIAM PATTERSON WHITE

Author of "Paradise Bend," "Longhorns," etc.

The first part of the story briefly retold in story form.

IN THE longhorn country, when one gentleman bestows baneful glances upon another, it behooves the innocent bystander to be vigilant.

So when Johnny Ramsay, of the Cross-in-a-box, observed a red-headed individual glance sourly in through the door of the Happy Heart Saloon at a brown-bearded stranger drinking at the bar, he sat upright. A few minutes later the red-head entered and sat in at a game of poker.

One of the players being forced to retire, the red-head invited Brown-beard to take the empty place. Brown-beard would rather not. Red-head insisted and insinuated. Brown-beard strode to the table and sat down.

The deal passed around the table and came to Brown-beard. As he flipped the first card to the red-head, the latter's gun flashed while he sent the cards flying. Brown-beard sank in a heap.

"He tried to skin us, the —— tinhorn! Didya see him deal from the bottom of the deck?" exclaimed the red-head indignantly.

No one had—but no one could prove otherwise. "Slim" Berdan, the town marshal, settled the case quickly.

"Stranger," said he, "yuh got twenty minutes to pull yore freight out o' Farewell, or we'll hang yuh some."

Before the body was buried Jake Rule, Sheriff of Fort Creek County, arrived and identified the dead man as Mat Neville, a Wells-Fargo detective, a man who had never been known to cheat in his life.

CREAK and jangle! Hoofbeat and bump! The through stage from Paradise Bend to Marysville pulled in with the guard killed and "Whisky" Jim, the driver, creased on the head.

"Road-agents again," he explained simply. This was the tenth time he had been stopped.

An hour later Bill Stahl, Sheriff of Sunset County, arrived and posted notices to the effect that the Territory would pay one thousand dollars apiece for the delivery, dead or alive, of the bandits who were operating in Sunset County. The Wells-Fargo Company duplicated the offer.

At Sheriff Rule's home, Johnny interviewed both Rule and Sheriff Stahl, but learned nothing more of the road-agents.

"Yeah, she sounds a heap interestin'. I guess I'll just go after that reward," he concluded.

Then entered smilingly Racey Dawson and Telescope Laguerre.

"We heard yuh through the window," they announced, "an' we decided to go with yuh, so we can sort o' look after yuh an' horn in on the two thousand wheels a bandit."

So they laid their plans. The sheriffs were to tell nothing of the scheme to any one, but just to greet the three casually as before. Two of the trio were to secure jobs as stray men, probably from "Scotty" Mackenzie, of the Flying-M; the third was to work at the stage depot. Already they were counting the reward-money.

Two days later the three met again and Johnny Ramsay took the road to Paradise Bend, the others to follow at intervals.

As he was picking his way along a difficult trail three mornings later, three shots cracked ahead of him. Where the trail turned into a grove of cottonwoods he found their cause—two dead men in a buckboard, and a dead horse. In the distance three riders were rapidly fording a stream. Johnny aimed and fired, but the horses, two chestnuts and a blacktail dun, were already out of range.

The murdered men he found had been robbed. Just as Johnny discovered the place from which they had been ambushed, hoofbeats sounded on the road. He drew into the bushes. When the carefully dressed rider drew up, Johnny stepped from his place of concealment. Together they examined the bodies. Then the stranger suggested:

"We might as well go back to the Bend together. They've got too much of a start to do anything."

"Howdja know I'm goin' to the Bend, anyhow?" questioned Johnny.

"This is how," came the answer and he stared into the twin-barrels of the stranger's Derringer.

Johnny, disarmed, riding in front, the Derringer in the rear, they rode to Paradise Bend.

WHEN the town was reached the captor announced he had caught a road-agent red-handed.

"I'll getcha my rope," yelled a citizen and the crowd pressed forward.

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While Johnny was trying to yell his explanations, "Soapy" Ragsdale and Jim Mace, two old friends of his, edged their way forward and took their places by his side.

"I got my finger on the trigger," Ragsdale announced, pointing his carbine. "I don't like this here bellerin' for ropes an' I don't give a —— who knows it."

The crowd remained at a respectful distance.

Then arrived the marshal who ordered a trial and picked Dave Dusenbury's store as the court-room.

Constituting himself judge, the marshal chose twelve jurors, although he declared "a jury ain't really necessary," and proceeded to the trial.

While every window of the store was jammed with people, Harry Slay, the man who had brought Johnny into town, told his story, twisting fact and argument so cunningly that the two appeared as one.

But the light came to Johnny. By working cartridges through his rifle he proved that if he had fired the shots, the shell cases must be nicked, for all which passed through his gun came out that way. Next he declared that the empty shells, if they had been thrown out, would be found in the ambush—without a nick. One nicked shell would be where he had thrown it after shooting at the horsemen.

In conclusion he declared that if the bullets were dug out of the wounds they would be found to be 38's while his were 45-90's.

But the marshal and jury did not want to lose time investigating. A murmur arose. The marshal coughed, fingered his six-shooter and said:

"Gents, y'all heard what Harry Slay said. Y'all heard what this feller said. What do you say?"

"Yes, gents, what do you say?" drawled a voice from the doorway.

Scotty Mackenzie and eight of the Flying-M riders pressed in and stood by Johnny's side.

"Gents, yuh was goin' to say somethin'. What was it?" reminded Scotty.

"They was a-goin' to adjourn over to Yaller Medicine Crick to look at some evidence," put in the marshal.

"Oh yeah," said Scotty. "Guess we'll trail along. Yuh see I was standin' in that doorway a good ten minutes before anybody saw me."

At the scene of the murder they found the cartridge shells behind a boulder, as Johnny had foretold, unscratched. And a bullet dug from one of the bodies proved to be a 40-65.

"I guess that pretty near clears the cat-hop," suggested Scotty.

"Shore it does," affirmed the marshal, and Slay pronounced his satisfaction.

DURING the ride back to town Johnny engaged himself and Laguerre to Scotty as stray men, explaining his purpose.

The next day Scotty had something worth while, a battered silver watch which had once belonged to the murdered Bill Homan.

"I found her at the edge o' the quicksand I've been fencin'," he explained. "An' there wasn't a hoofmark or heelmark within forty feet. I'm tellin' yuh, Johnny, that this timepiece was throwed from across the river some time during the night."

"An' she shore goes to show the road-agents live in town or near it," agreed Johnny.

That evening on his way to Slay's Broken Dollar Saloon, Johnny stumbled and fell in the yard of the stage depot, seventy yards away. Before he could get out of the way, the back door of the saloon opened and a woman, Mrs. Lotta Wallace, Slay's widowed sister, stepped into the yard.

"My God, what a life! I wish I were dead!" she moaned to herself.

Johnny was destined to see more of Mrs. Wallace. The next afternoon when he was sitting with Dorothy Burr, Slay came up to take her riding, and Mrs. Wallace, who accompanied him, asked Johnny to spend the afternoon at her home—where Johnny learned some things—the taste of "Texas Pete" mixed by herself, and the art of lighting two cigarets with one match.

He became the envy of the town, for he was the only man she had ever let come to see her—and Mrs. Wallace was a beauty.

At the scene of the murder, Laguerre and Johnny examined the ground. At the conclusion Telescope summed up:

"We know dat one dese men use de 40-65 Winchestaire, two pony is de good-nature chestnut un one is de long-leg, vicious, black-tail dun. Dere can not be many pony lak dees hoss."

That evening Racey Dawson came into town full of news.

Another murder had been committed at Farewell. Masked riders had ridden into town at night and shot up "Slim" Berdan, deputy sheriff, and Lute Holloway, the latter fatally. Jake Rule and a posse were hunting the slayers.

But what interested Johnny most was that one of the murderers used a 40-65. And one rode a light-colored horse—possibly a black-tail dun.

The next day Johnny and Telescope were loudly hired by Scotty at the Flying-M. And when they reached the Bend, Racey was in charge at the stage depot, having secured the position by whipping "Skinny" Devinney the former occupant.

There they left him, while they rode on to Rocket.

AT ROCKET Johnny and Telescope learned that an Indian on the Fort Yardley reservation owned, or had owned a black-tail dun.

"If I'm ever over in the Hatchet Creek country I'll surely look up Mr. Black Bear," Johnny commented.

Also they met the red-head.

As they were leaving town a wild rider plunged down the street. A shot brought his horse down but he ran on toward Johnny.

"I can tell—" he screamed.

He got no further. "Chance" Blaisdell, deputy sheriff, riding after him, shot him dead.

"One o' the hold-ups that robbed the Wells-Fargo office at Cutter last night," he explained. "I downed his horse an' got him a new one—then he got away from me again."

A torn express gold-packet and one of Old Man Fane's gold-dust bags substantiated Blaisdell's story.

"Looks like he done it all right," remarked the red-head.

"Looks are shore queer things—sometimes," drawled Johnny.

During the day's ride Johnny and Laguerre came upon a dead horse, which they concluded must have belonged to the man Blaisdell had killed. Hiding the expensive saddle in a tree, Johnny pocketed the bridle.

"She's just a li'l thing like this bridle that'll maybe trip 'em all up," he argued.

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ON THE trail of the Indian who owned a black-tail dun Johnny and Laguerre arrived at the Fort Yardley reservation where to their surprise they saw the red-head standing with the colonel.

Arriving at the Indian agent's house, they explained that they were hunting for some horses Scotty had lost. With an Indian policeman they started over the reservation, meeting the red-head as they rode off.

Their search revealed no stolen horses but the policeman disclosed that Black Bear had sold his black-tail dun to the red-head.

Returning to the agency they were cross-examined by an officious major who finally gave up the job in disgust. The agent then revealed that the troops would soon have a three-months' pay-day —forty or fifty thousand dollars—and that the colonel had been warned that the paymaster would be held up somewhere between the railroad and the fort.

"Would you mind tellin' who warned him?" asked Johnny.

"It was that red-headed man—says his name's Barry Camp," replied the agent.

"It ain't natural to warn the soldiers o' nothin' in this country," argued Johnny later. "S'pose now their paymaster is robbed? Would we ride outa our way to warn 'em? I guess not; we'd laugh ourselves sick.

"An' now this red-head rides from hell to breakfast to tell 'em some naughty men are a-layin' for their darlin' paymaster. I dunno why, but I'm aimin' to find out."

At the fort they learned from the trader that the red-head had left that morning, stating repeatedly that he was bound for Seymour City.

"The red-head ain't never goin' to Seymour City," was Johnny's decision.

At Paradise Bend they found Racey busy hitching up a buckboard for the paymaster. A troop of soldiers were ready to escort it.

"The Bend's been stiller than a church on Monday," Racey reported. "The red-head got in yesterday."

CHAPTER XIX

BUSHWHACKERS

"NO, JOHNNY, Dorothy ain't home. She went out ridin' with Harry Slay. So yo're workin' for Scotty now, huh? How's tricks with you? Yo're lookin' fine. When'd yuh leave the Cross-in-a-box? An' how's that good-for-nothin' Jack Richie brother o' mine? I declare, yuh'd think he'd never had a sister the way he don't write. Lands sakes, here I am a-keepin' yuh a-standin' there an' not askin' yuh in. But that's me. I always was careless about my manners.

"C'min, Johnny, an' rest yore hat. There's Benjamin's partic'lar chair, an' yuh can roost yore feet on the rung an' talk to me while I mix up a cake—chocolate cake, Johnny. Yuh'll stay to dinner, o' course—What? One o' Benjamin's partic'lar personal friends an' yuh trot right off thisaway? Yuh gotta stay to dinner. I wanna hear all about Tom an' Kate an' that li'l Junior child. I know you've seen 'em. Just you go right now an' put that cayuse in the corral."

Tall, angular Mrs. Burr slapped her arms akimbo. Her harsh features radiated hospitality as she beamed at Johnny Ramsay. But that perturbed young man took no comfort in her smiles. Dorothy had gone riding again with Slay!

"I can't stay, Mis' Burr," he told her, forcing his pleasantest expression. "I'd shore like to, but I got my job to look out for. I guess I'll be weavin' along. S'long. See yuh later."

Johnny stuck foot in stirrup, slid into the saddle, and whirled his horse. Mrs. Burr followed his progress to Main Street with wistful eyes. She liked Johnny Ramsay.

The red-head was not visible on the hotel porch when Johnny passed down Main Street. But his horse, as Johnny took good care to make sure, as he rode by, was in the corral. On two chairs, tip-tilted against the façade of Ragsdale's store, sat the proprietor and Telescope Laguerre. The attitudes of both men were pathetically lethargic, but they came alive sufficiently to nod to Johnny. Laguerre even jiggled a languid hand. After which the half-breed pulled his hat-brim forward and appeared to fall into a gentle doze.

Johnny's mouth-corners quirked with satisfaction. From the sidewalk in front of Ragsdale's store a man might without effort observe all that went on in the vicinity of the hotel and the corral. Likewise, Main Street, from the same vantage-point, was open to the view throughout its breadth and length.

Beyond the river the trampled trail was evidence enough that the cavalry had passed that way. Johnny, to whom the grind of trailing appealed not at all, suddenly resolved to change his plans and precede the military to the railroad.

"Why for have I gotta swallow their dust for a week?" he asked himself. "Maybe if I hit Damson ahead of 'em I'll learn somethin' real nice an' nifty, which is me,

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yores truly, forty ways from the Jack."

To avoid a meeting with the soldiers Johnny and his mount departed from the trail and the cañons of the region swallowed them up.

Four days later Chuck Morgan's wife, swabbing out her dish-pan in the old C-Y ranch-house on Soogan Creek, was startled by the abrupt arrival of a scrubby-faced young man who said he was hungry. Jane Morgan was not an inquisitive person, but she wondered as she fed the traveler, why Johnny Ramsay was in such a hurry and why he wasn't even decently communicative. It wasn't like him—either the hurry or the short answers. Poor boy, he looked tired out.

"Have another cup?" she asked, poising the coffee-pot invitingly.

"I'm full to the roof o' my mouth," said Johnny, shaking his head. "Guess I'll just smoke a pill while the li'l hoss rests his feet. The oats yuh gimme'll put new life in him. How's Chuck?"

It is to be feared that Johnny was in an abstracted mood that day. For he could not have definitely told how Chuck was two minutes after Jane Morgan had replied.

Within two days Johnny Ramsay, choosing the night-time for his entry, oozed unostentatiously into Marysville, the county seat of Fort Creek County. He went at once to the house of Judge Allison, his very particular friend. The jurist, wise in his generation, made no comment when Johnny drew down every blind in the judicial sitting-room. He gave Johnny a drink of excellent whisky, hearkened while the stray man asked a question, and slowly shook his white head.

"The local bad-men are accounted for," he said. "We only had three. The Circle-S outfit lynched Dave Long last week, and Little Bill and Slim Edwards became embroiled in the small matter of an extra ace day before yesterday and most considerately eliminated themselves. Yes, I know there are in town two or three others that will bear watching, but these few are small fry, lacking the heart for great enterprise. Is it a fair question to ask why you——"

The judge put his finger-points together and looked inquiringly at Johnny.

"Well, yuh see—" hesitated the stray man.

"There, there, that'll do," said the judge hastily. "Don't bother to explain. I shouldn't have asked. How's business up where you are?"

Johnny's eyes twinkled.

"Yo're a real human man, Judge," he said. "I wish I could tell yuh, but I ain't none too certain about a lot o' things myself. Know a jigger named Bale Harper, Judge?"

Judge Allison was one of those happily gifted folk that never forget names or faces.

"When I was in the Bend two years ago," was the judge's answer, "Jim Mace pointed out Bale Harper to me. Why?"

"I was just wonderin' if by any chance the gent had been in Marysville?"

"He is."

"Oh, he is, is he?" chuckled Johnny, his eyes glinting in the lamplight. "How long's he been here?"

"Since day before yesterday. I was on the porch of the Sunrise when he rode in."

"Come alone?"

"No, there was a man with him, a customer even more tough-looking than friend Bale, name of Keen."

Johnny banged a resentful fist on his knee.

"Might 'a' knowed it!" he cried. "I clean forgot all about Tom Keen when I was in the Bend. When'd yuh see 'em last, Judge?"

"This afternoon in the Sunrise."

"Maybe they've gone."

"We can easily decide that point. Suppose we step down to the Sunrise for a smile. If they're not there we'll look about."

"I ain't a heap anxious to have 'em see me," objected Johnny.

"In that case allow me to play the detective," suggested the accommodating judge. "There's a Chicago paper on that shelf."

While Johnny sat and waited and read the Chicago paper came the sound of footsteps on the sidewalk. The feet stopped at the judge's door and knuckles rapped on the panel.

"——!" Johnny muttered at this mischance and started to tiptoe across the floor.

BEFORE he could reach the doorway giving access to the dining-room, the front door opened. Johnny promptly altered his course toward a match-safe hanging on the wall and glanced over his shoulder. The man looking in out of the night was Jack Murgatroyd, the slimmer and older half of Sheriff Stahl's force of deputies. His eyes, small and bright as black beads, stared at Johnny.

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He nodded curtly, entered, closed the door behind him, wiped his swarthy features on his sleeve and remarked that it was a hot night. Johnny Ramsay, busily engaged in stuffing his hatband with the contents of the match-safe on the wall, observed that it was hotter than that.

The deputy appeared to ponder this statement a moment. Then he crossed the floor to the nearest chair, sat, and rolled him a cigaret. Ever a silent person Jack acted in character for fully fifteen minutes before he spoke. Johnny had long since returned to his friend, the Chicago paper.

"Seen the judge?" asked the deputy.

Johnny affected to be startled.

"For Gawd's sake, Jack," he exclaimed with admirably simulated irritation, "might as well kill a man as scare him to death thisaway. I'd clean forgot there was anybody else in the room. Some day, I'm tellin' yuh, yuh'll strain yore throat talkin' so much."

Jack smiled Wintrily.

"I shore gotta look out for that throat," he said, and smiled again his January smile. "I was askin' yuh about the judge."

"He's down street some'ers," replied Johnny. "Didja look in the Sunrise?"

"No." Jack shook his head.

Ensued another long silence.

"Did the judge have a game on or somethin'?" inquired the deputy suddenly.

"There yuh go again—an' me with my weak heart."

"Guess yore heart an' my throat'd make a pair, huh?"

"Not to draw to," denied Johnny, at which Jack Murgatroyd laughed as at the most side-splitting joke and repeated his question.

"I dunno," said Johnny, and turned a sheet. "He didn't say nothin' about no li'l game. But you know Judge Allison, Jack, he don't always say what he's goin' to do next."

"I expect," said Jack Murgatroyd.

An hour later Judge Allison returned. He greeted the deputy briefly and sat down before his table. Murgatroyd dropped his cigaret on the floor and crushed it beneath a spurred heel.

"Just stopped in to tell yuh, Judge, that they won't be no trial o' Hen Riley next week," remarked Mr. Murgatroyd.

"Why on earth did they lynch him? That Single bartender wasn't popular."

"They didn't lynch him. He done picked the lock of the calaboose door at Rocket an' e-loped on the sheriff's own hoss."

"Which is rather ironical when you stop to consider," observed the judge.

"Ain't it," said Murgatroyd, quite at sea as to the meaning of the word "ironical." "The sheriff an' Chance is trailin' Hen now—he rode north. But Bill Stahl's Steamboat is one fast, sur-vigorous cayuse."

"Did you ride from Rocket merely to tell me this about Hen?"

"No, I'm just passin' through on my way to the railroad, an' Bill he told me to be shore to stop an' tell yuh so's yuh'd know what to expect when Hen didn't show up on time. Bill's sendin' me to Damson an' Piegan an' them towns to scout 'round. He's got an idea maybe them road-agents that's been raisin' —— got friends or somethin' on the railroad. So long, Judge. So long, Johnny. Hot night."

Jack Murgatroyd tilted his hat and was gone.

"I'll bet that's the first long speech he ever made in his life," observed Johnny.

The judge nodded, and poured himself a modest two fingers.

"He must have been drinking," he suggested. "There's the bottle, Johnny. It's your move. When you've made it, we'll adjourn, if you don't mind, to the bench back of the stable. There's a breeze there."

"An' that's more'n they is here with the blinds down an' the lamp goin'," grinned Johnny. "No more, thank yuh, Judge. Yore whisky ain't the stuff to make a habit of. It spoils the taste for ordinary paint. Any time yo're ready."

There was not much of a breeze on the bench behind the stable, but such as it was they unbuttoned their shirts and made the most of it.

"They're at the dance-hall," said the judge in a low tone, "and not in the main part of the building either. That's why it took me so long to find them. They were in one of the small back rooms. Tom Keen was sitting at the table with his face in his hands, looking at nothing. Bale was walking up and down. Every now and then he'd stop, pour himself a fresh drink and gulp it down. They looked as if they were waiting for something."

"Maybe they are," observed Johnny.

The judge shot him a sidewise glance and fanned his hot face with his hat.

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"What did they do when yuh went in the room?" questioned Johnny.

"I didn't go in the room," was the judge's ingenuous denial. "I saw them through the window."

"Judge, I'm agoin' to tell yuh somethin'," Johnny said, suddenly feeling that Judge Allison had earned an explanation, and went on to tell the jurist of his present mission.

The judge's interest was flattering.

"An' that's all I know," concluded Johnny. "What do you think?"

The judge lit a cigar before replying. He regarded the glowing tip in silence a moment.

"I think I know Barry Camp," he said at last. "The description tallies with that of a tinhorn who used to operate in Piegan City about three years ago. Dave Yule was the name he used. 'Reddy' Yule the boys called him. He stayed about six months, then he shot one of the boys, and public opinion bringing pressure to bear he thought it well to leave town. Your friend Camp is Yule. No doubt of it. That hairless face, those blank staring yellow eyes, and the man's other characteristics haven't any duplicates in this Territory. What? No, he can't be arrested for the Piegan City killing. It looked like an even break."

"Yeah," nodded Johnny, thinking of the manner of Mat Neville's death. "That's the red-head's specialty—makin' it look like an even break."

"He's clever."

"He's worse 'n that. Yuh don't remember ever seein' him 'round this part o' the country, do yuh?"

"I do not. I never even heard of him since the Piegan City days till you spoke of him tonight. But I think you're wrong in one premise, Johnny. That red-headed tinhorn and Harry Slay are not partners in this hold-up business."

"You must 'a' seen Mis' Wallace," Johnny said keenly.

"Petticoats never have influenced me," shot back the judge. "I know Slay—played draw with him every time I've visited the Bend, and he's an honest gambler. When a gambler is straight in his profession he doesn't walk crookedly otherwise. Slay's all right. Just because he formed a slight dislike for you——"

"Slight dislike!" cut in the indignant Johnny. "He tried to have me lynched!"

"But then you see he thought you were a road-agent," the judge explained smoothly. "His action was natural."

"Maybe it was, but it don't make me love him none. You act like I'd ought to kiss him or somethin'."

"You're prejudiced against Slay," insisted the judge. "He's no friend of mine, but I shouldn't care to see injustice done him—or any one. By the way, I hear he's engaged to Dorothy Burr. Is it true?"

"It's a —— lie!" cried Johnny. "He's only a friend o' hers, that's all."

Judge Allison smiled into the darkness. He believed he knew the reason for Johnny's vehemence. Rumor wears swift wings in the cow country—and Captain Burr's daughter was a very pretty girl.

"Guess maybe I'll borrow yore a-larm clock, Judge," said Johnny, yawning and stretching elaborately. "I'll roll in on yore hay in the stable. I'm gonna drift south at four so's nobody'll see me. I might be back later."

"You'll sleep in the house," the judge declared firmly. "I've an extra bed, and it's yours. Let's go in. I'm sleepy myself."

At a few minutes past four in the morning Johnny Ramsay was riding the Damson trail. At six o'clock, when his horse topped a wooded ridge, a backward glance revealed to Johnny that two horsemen were up and coming on the dusty track. Johnny rode on thoughtfully, thankful that he and his horse were invisible among the trees.

At the foot of the reverse slope the trail crossed a gravelly wash. Johnny swung his horse into the wash, rode along it for a quarter mile, found a tiny stream, and followed its bed to where it bisected a round and grassy basin set cup-like among hills. Which hills were covered with a thin growth of mournful pines.

TWENTY minutes later Johnny's horse, tied to a pine, was beginning to doze peacefully in his favorite three-cornered attitude, while his master lay on his stomach behind a low and twisted jack-pine and watched the distant trail with alert eyes.

The two horsemen lifted into sight at the top of the sway-backed ridge. Black dots against the gray-green slope, they slid down to the gravelly wash, paused not at all, and held on along the trail.

"Wish I'd thought to find out what color hosses Bale an' Keen was ridin'," lamented

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Johnny, his eye-corners puckered. "Bay—or red, these two, but they might be straddled by first an' foremost citizens for all I can tell. Why 'n —— didn't I get the judge to find out for me?"

He frowningly constructed a cigaret, lit it, and rolled over on his back to wait a decent interval before riding on. The trail and the two riders that rode it were hidden behind a swelling fold of rising ground that ran in a long crescent across the face of the land. The arc of the crescent bent northward and the trail showed again in a short white strip beyond the western horn before it vanished in the pale green coolness of the cottonwoods lining the banks of Bubbling Creek.

On the farther side of the creek the trail slanted into sight across the broad breast of a pillow-shaped hill with a notched shoulder, and lost itself in the notch.

Johnny, flat on his back, finished his cigaret. It was eminently peaceful on the top of his hill. A friendly wind blew softly in among the pines and made them sing. Johnny pulled his hat over his face.

He awoke with a start, rolled over on his elbows and looked about him suspiciously. But everything was as it should be: the horse dozed three-cornered, the sweet, sharp odor of the singing pines was in his nostrils, the peace of ages continued to hang over the landscape. Johnny's eyes instinctively sought that part of the countryside where the trail showed white beyond the western horn of the crescent of rising ground. And as he looked two darkish dots came into view upon that streak of trail and vanished where it vanished in the shadow of the cottonwoods along the creek.

Johnny waited for the two dots to reappear on the trail where it crossed the slope of the pillow-shaped hill with the notched shoulder. They did not. But within fifteen minutes he saw them doubling back toward the tip of the crescent horn.

"They's boulders there, an' one fine long outcrop," said Johnny aloud.

He nodded his head as the dots left the trail and stopped several hundred yards beyond it, and well inside the horn of the crescent.

"Leavin' their hosses so far away they won't whinner," he went on.

Two specks detached themselves from the dots, moved back toward the trail, slanted up the slope to the horn and disappeared among the boulders.

"Ain't they the tadpoles," Johnny observed admiringly. "Yuh might almost think them fellers was layin' to bushwhack somebody. Yessir, yuh shore might. Maybe it's another hold-up though. The Damson stage ought to pull through in an hour. Guess Li'l Willie better wait an' watch the pretty birdies."

So Little Willie waited and watched apathetically till a cloud of dust lifting and drifting above the horn of the crescent heralded the coming of the southbound stage. There were no sudden smoke-puffs above the boulders. The stage appeared on the streak of trail leading to the creek. The two men in ambush made no hostile move. The stage continued without interruption to the creek, rolled in under the cottonwoods, rolled out beyond the ford, and snailed upward toward the notch in the pillow-shaped hill.

"I guess I'm elected all right," murmured Johnny. "Range's two thousand easy," he added, pondering deeply. "I'd shore like to know—guess now I might's well go'n find out."

He rose to his feet, went to his horse, and mounted. Taking care to keep happily placed ridges between himself and the men lying on the crescent's horn Johnny worked his way to the creek. Heading up-stream toward the ford he rode warily among the cottonwoods till no more than a half mile of level ground separated him from the horses of the bushwhackers.

It looked like a good place to stop. For there were red willows growing above a cut-bank, below which Bubbling Creek ran among rocks and gossipped to itself with a pleasant sound of splashing.

Johnny tied the horse between the bank and the willows, dragged Daisy Belle from the scabbard under the right fender and "Injuned" forward on foot. When he came near the ford he stopped and squatted on his heels behind a thick little red willow.

The horses of the two bushwhackers were not more than three hundred yards distant. Of the men themselves he could see nothing. But on the ridge of the crescent's horn he could see plainly the rocks and the angling white outcrop that hid the precious pair.

Crack! A rifle spoke among the rocks. A spurt of smoke drifted across the outcrop.

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Crack! Crack! Crack! Another Winchester joined the first. The marksman, by the smoke, was fortified behind a large boulder on the outcrop's right flank.

Cra-ack! A pause. *Cra-ack!* Another pause. *Cra-ack!* Some one several hundred yards beyond the bushwhackers was shooting very methodically. The first two shots evidently struck and stopped, but the third ricochetted and keyholed with a tearing whistle high above Johnny's head. The two rifles among the boulders snarled furiously. Occasionally the painstaking rifle in the distance would reply.

"By the racket these two are makin'," observed Johnny with a grin, "Mister Slow-fire on the other side must 'a' tickled 'em up. Maybe they ain't after me—by Gawd!"

The oath was called forth by the idea that had struck him. It was an excellent idea, and it contained a large element of risk.

"But they'll be too busy to look 'round," reasoned Johnny, greatly taken with his excellent idea. "An' if they do——"

He left the sentence unfinished, rose to his feet, cocked his rifle, and started toward the horses of the bushwhackers. He reached them without incident, calmly picked up the trailing reins and led both animals back to the cottonwoods.

Once in the shelter of the belt of trees, he unhurriedly searched the saddle-bags and cantinas. Among other articles in the pocket of one cantina he found a flannel shirt with an ancient envelope in the breast pocket. The envelope was filled with cigaret papers. So ancient was the envelope that Johnny could not at first decipher the address. But finally, by holding the envelope at a certain angle, he made out that it was addressed to William Harper, at Paradise Bend. Bale Harper's other name was William.

"Wish they hadn't tore the stamp an' postmark off," grumbled the never-satisfied Johnny Ramsay. "I'd shore like to know where she was mailed."

Johnny's busy fingers pried into the saddle-bags on the other horse. There was nothing in them to give a hint to the owner's identity. Nor was there anything revealing in the cantinas. He loosed the slicker tied behind the cantle. There were no marks save those of wear on that slicker, but its removal bared to public gaze a staple pocket on the back of the cantle. Some one had burnt, with a running iron, on the flap of the staple pocket, the initials T. K.

"Tom Keen," smiled Johnny, listening to the sounds of battle on the crescent's horn. "They ain't ridin' this trail for no good, that's a cinch. Mister! Just listen to 'em a-wastin' cartridges like they cost nothin'. They must be packin' a couple o' belts apiece. Wonder who they're shootin' at."

Johnny felt no great curiosity as to the identity of the unhappy individual. Whoever he might be, he was no friend of his, of course. He might even be a horse-thief, or something equally nefarious, and Messrs. Harper and Keen might be engaged in a kindly deed. Who could tell? Johnny, being a sensible person with business of his own, had no intention of mixing in the private affairs of other men. He did not consider the removal and search of the bushwhackers' property in the least out of the way. It was necessary.

"Guess I'll just lead these cayuses along with me a while," observed Johnny. "Settin' Bale an' Tom afoot will do 'em a whole heap o' good."

He mounted one of the animals and, leading the other, rode back to his horse. Arrived at the clump of red willows and his tail-switching pony, he began to be intrigued in spite of himself by that intermittent firing in the distance. It was palpably none of his business, yet . . . .

THE man lying behind the dead horse in the middle of the trail swore feelingly and tucked up his legs as a bullet grazed his left heel. That plunging piece of lead had been the tenth to nearly make him a cripple. He levered in a cartridge, shoved his Winchester across the neck of his horse and took a snapshot at a smoke-filled opening between two boulders on the crest of the crescent's horn. He did not expect to score a hit. By the manner in which his two enemies fought he judged them to be gentlemen of experience, and gentlemen of experience in warfare either dodge or change position after each shot, and these had been doing both.

It was an exceedingly one-sided affair, this little wayside brush. The sun was directly in the eyes of the man behind the dead horse, and it was only a question of time when one of his foes would work 'round to the flank and rear. Luckily there was

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no cover, except three lone cottonwoods and an outcrop on either flank or the rear, nearer than a thousand yards.

The man in the road was confident of being able to drop any one sufficiently ill-advised to attempt to reach the cottonwoods or the outcrop. He had ammunition in plenty—two beltsful. If he could stick it out till nightfall—or if a friend would happen that way; even the arrival of a nodding acquaintance or a total stranger, so that he were well-disposed, would be welcome.

The man behind the horse, having emptied his magazine, awkwardly, for he was cramped for room, began to stuff the long brass shells through the loading-gate. Before he completed the operation three bullets had furrowed the hide of his breastwork and one had grazed his shoulder. He could feel the blood, warm as perspiration, trickling down his chest. The wound stung and made him thirsty. He wished for a drink of the tepid water in his canteen, but that useful article was lying well down beneath some nine hundred and fifty pounds of dead pony.

Cra-ack! The report of a rifle sounded faintly on his left front. He thought instantly that the enemy had begun to work 'round him. But no buzzing piece of lead sailed over his head or tucked into the body of his mount. The rifles of his enemies ripped into hysterical action. No lead came his way. The inference was obvious. The friend had arrived.

The man behind the dead horse backed his rescuer shot for shot. The latter must have had a good position, for, while the fire of the bushwhackers dwindled to some very scattered shooting, the other's increased steadily.

A quarter of an hour after the first shot from that distant Winchester the bushwhackers' rifles were silent. A less prudent man than the one behind the horse would have gone forward to investigate. But he had fought the Indian many times. There might be a trick. He was content to remain where he was.

Minutes later he heard shots fired on the other side of the crescent. The friendly Winchester had not ceased to fire. The smoke of it was thick among the distant boulders. The sound of the shots behind the crescent became fainter and fainter.

Suddenly the man behind the dead horse jumped to his feet and ran as swiftly as his high heels would allow toward the tip of the crescent's horn. It was a run of several hundred yards. He arrived out of breath and puffing and plunged down behind a jagged rock. What he saw was in a measure gladdening. Toward the cottonwoods lining the bank of the creek, two men were scuttling for dear life—literally. About their hurrying feet jets of dust sprang up and mushroomed in little filmy clouds. The man threw his rifle forward and fired again and again. But he was too shaken with fast running for anything even approaching accurate shooting. The two men charged in among the trees. The man sent seven shots to hasten their going. There was no reply.

So he lay and watched the belt of green trees for a time. But nothing happened. He took off his hat and raised his head above the level of the rock. Not a shot. Then he rose to his feet, went back to his horse, and, with his rifle-barrel, levered up the body and freed the canteen.

Over the bulge of the tilted canteen he saw riding toward him down the slope of the crescent, a young man. The young man was leading two horses, and he was coming at a sharp lope. The man's black eyes glittered.

"Good boy, dat Johnny Ramsay," said Telescope Laguerre.

"Yay, old-timer!" bawled the approaching rider. "I never knowed it was you they was tryin' to rub out till I come scoutin' along the rimrock an' recognized yore dead hoss. Even then I wasn't a heap shore."

"I am glad you was tak a chance," said Laguerre simply. "I tell you, my friend, I t'ink one tam she was all day wit' me mabbeso. W'ere you geet de two cayuse?"

"They belong to them bushwhackers, Mister Harper and Mister Tom Keen," grinned Johnny. "They was standin' there all so free an' handy, so I just glommed on to 'em. Climb on, Telescope. We ain't got time to blat 'round here thisaway."

"You wait teel I geet my saddle off. I wan' for see w'ere dem men was hide. I heet one, I tink, me."

"You did not. They ran away too —— fast."

"I crease one mabbeso."

"Like—say, Telescope, yo're nicked yoreself! Yore shirt's all blood. How——"

"Small leetle graze," Laguerre interrupted impatiently. "Not hurt 'tall."

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He fastened his own saddle behind Bale Harper's cantle, swung up with a nimble leg-sweep and galloped up the slope with Johnny.

Carefully refraining from exposing their persons on the skyline they inspected the places where the bushwhackers had lain. There were many 45-90 spent shells scattered about, and on a flat rock between two boulders a splash of red.

"Told yuh so!" Johnny, who had done nothing of the kind, hastened to say. "Daisy Belle an' me are shore reg'lar folks. We never miss."

"You tell me so!" cried Laguerre indignantly. "You tell me so! I tell you, Johnny, dat was my shot do dat. I was see dees man right troo de sight, an'——"

"Well, all right, s'posin' yuh did," flashed Johnny, switching to the rightabout with pliant ease. "S'posin' yuh did. What good did yuh do? Lookit the way he run off. Ragged work, Telescope, ragged work. But don'tcha care. Some day, if yuh watch my smoke real careful an' profuse, an' if yuh can get as good a rifle as Daisy Belle, which yuh can't, yuh'll maybe learn how to shoot. I don't say yuh will certain shore. But maybe yuh will."

LAGUERRE, moved to wrathful reply, incautiously stepped forward beyond the outcrop. Instantly, from the spot where the trail entered the cottonwoods, a rifle cracked. A bullet struck a rock at his right hand and snarled off at an angle. The half-breed dropped behind the outcrop, clicked in a cartridge and fired at the drift of gray smoke. He would have fired again, but Johnny grabbed him by the toe of his boot.

"C'mon, c'mon," urged Johnny. "Them sharps 'll keep. I dunno what yo're agoin' to do, but I'm agoin' somewhere, an' I'm agoin' right now at once. I wanna get to Damson an' I can't do it by sittin' here watchin' you blow holes through li'l cotton-wood trees that never didja any harm."

"Nevair you min' about dem tree," Laguerre said placidly, his good-humor completely restored. "You t'ink you was de shore shot, but some day I show you, by gar."

He crawfished to the rear, rolled over and sat up. Rifle across his knees he grinned up into Johnny's face.

"Eet ees bes' I stay here, mabbeso," he suggested.

"What for?"

"W'y you guess I come sout'?"

"I was meanin' to ask yuh that, only work's been sort o' brisk an' busy the last few minutes. I bite. Why?"

"'Cause dat red-head she ees ride aftair de cavalry, she was meet de cavalry, un she was ride wit' de lieut'nant, un stay wit' him, by gar. I do not unnerstan' dat, me. So I come for fin' you. I tell you, Johnny, I have t'ink at de firs' dat red-head she be hones' man. You say no. Aw right. Den w'y een —— she stay wit' de cavalry? W'at kin' o' chance have she for turn de treeck eef she stay wit' de cavalry?"

"How do yuh know he's still with the cavalry? Maybe——"

"Mabbeso yes. I know she ees wit' de cavalry, 'cause I was een de camp un talk wit' de sergeant, un I hear de lieut'nant ask heem for ride wit' de troop, un I hear de major say de same t'ing, un dat red-head she say she glad for ride wit' de troop. Now w'at you t'ink?"

The half-breed smiled a triumphant smile and rubbed his rifle-stock with the palm of his hand. Johnny pushed his hat back and scratched a perplexed head.

"I dunno," he said truthfully. "But there's somethin' funny 's —— about all this."

"Somet'ing ees all tam funny about dees," concurred Laguerre sweetly, climbing into his saddle.

"But look here, Telescope—" began Johnny, as they rode off.

"I look un I look," interrupted the half-breed, "un I tell you, my frien', de more I look de less I see, un I t'ink, by gar, dat ees de way wit' you."

"Yuh do, huh?" yapped Johnny, stung in a tender spot. "Well, it ain't, not for a minute. Never think it, old-timer. Just you wiggle along with me, an' you'll see."

"W'at will I see?" demanded Laguerre.

"Lots," was the somewhat vague reply.

"Mabbe I do un mabbe I do not. Anyway I t'ink I see somet'ing eef I stay here. Tomorrow de cavalry un de red-head weel come, un I want for see w'at dem bush-w'ackair do. Perhaps dey weel shoot de red-head."

Laguerre licked his lips and looked hopeful.

"Yo're crazy," averred Johnny. "There's

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no hope for yuh, Telescope, not a-tall. I'm the jigger they're after."

"You."

"Li'l ol' me. I'm the hairpin they expected to down when you come along an' natur-ally you was better'n nothin' so they cut down. But it was all more or less an accident—huh? Shore I know it was me. I was in Marysville when Bale Harper an' Tom Keen's there. I light out before daylight an' I look back when I'm some ways along an' here they come. Yuh know that wash a while back?

"Yeah, that's where I left the trail. Well I'm on a hill watchin' when Harper an' Keen rip down the trail, an' they don't stop at the wash at all, just kept foggin' right along like they knowed where they was a-goin' an' in a hurry to get there, till they scattered 'round this ridge, picked out their particular rocks an' lay down to wait. If they'd been *trailin'* me they'd 'a' stopped at the wash an' scouted up an' down to see which way I went. Instead o' that yuh know what they did."

"They must see you track een de trail."

"Guess they did, but I'm figurin' they took 'em for somebody else's, some gent who left town the night before maybe or they'd never 'a' acted the way they did—I tell yuh the stage went by. They didn't even bat their eyes at it. Yuh make me sick, Telescope. I tell yuh I know it was me. I'd shore admire to find out how they knowed I was in town. The judge knowed an' so did Jack Murgatroyd. O' course the judge didn't tell, an' Jack's another clam, an' besides he never did train with that Harper an' Keen outfit anyway.

"Here's a good place for me to leave yuh, Telescope. You can sift up that draw, swing east a ways, an' there y' are at the finest kind o' hill all made to order for lookin' over the landscape. C'mon in to Damson soon's yuh can. Yuh might be needed. So long. Be a good boy an' write home often an' don't forget to say yore li'l prayers."

CHAPTER XX

GOVERNMENT MONEY

ONE store, two saloons, a blacksmith shop, a stage station, four houses, a railroad station, and that grateful structure, a large and dripping water-tank, scattered as though by cheerful chance along the flanks of a large railroad corral, made up the village that was Damson.

Johnny stopped at the trough that the considerate agent had built beneath the water-tank, allowed his horse and himself a sparing drink apiece, and rode to the station.

He stood on the grimy door-sill and surveyed the interior. The agent, a young man with tremendously long legs and a neck to match, sat well down in a wire-trussed chair and slept tunefully. Johnny forbore to interrupt his snores and crossed to one of the saloons.

"Got any ice?" he demanded of a sweating bartender.

The latter affected to faint. He seized the bar with both hands and gasped,

"Ice! Ice! I done heard that name long, long ago when I was a toddlin' child wearin' aperns an' things, but, stranger, I clean forgot what the word means. Will whisky do?"

"No, gimme a beer."

The beer, washy-looking, almost colorless, was slid in front of him. He picked up the glass, walked out into the shimmering heat that filled the road and solemnly poured the tepid liquid on the ground. Which being done he returned to the round-eyed bartender.

"Wanted to see if she'd sizzle," he calmly explained. "She did."

He spun a coin on the bar and retired to the watering-trough and the shade of the water-tank, where he spent a lonely hour. At the end of the hour, the agent, rousing, and hungry for human speech, joined him yawnfully.

"It's a wild life," observed Johnny.

"Shore is," agreed the agent. "If hell's any hotter'n this, I'd just as soon stay alive. Yessir, fried my bacon an' part o' myself where I fell down on the rails this mornin'. An' I quit the S. P. an' come up here 'cause New Mexico was too hot."

The agent laughed at the joke on himself and bit off a large and generous chew from the plug he kept in the crown of his cap. He seemed a guileless railroad man. Johnny wondered.

"Passed a whole troop o' cavalry yest'day," he lied easily. "They was driftin' this way. Goin' to meet the paymaster."

Johnny's gray eyes, the lids half-closed, were watching the agent with electric intentness. The latter stretched languidly and yawned anew and cavernously.

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"Goin' to meet the paymaster, huh," he repeated without interest. "A whole troop. He must be packin' a million dollars. Wish they was more o' you an' me," he added wistfully. "I'd like a li'l game."

"So'd I, but seein' 's we ain't twins, mumble-the-peg's about our limit."

Knife-flipping did not appeal to the agent, and Johnny soon departed to make friends with the citizenry of Damson.

The following morning Johnny, having exchanged profitless conversation with every inhabitant, was roosting on the agent's spare chair. He wished to be near the agent, whom he did not quite trust. The long-legged young man was thumbing waybills, and Johnny was looking across his bowed shoulders through the open door at the heat waves that danced before the face of the stage station.

And as he drowsily stared the down-stage rolled in and creaked to a halt in front of the station. The passengers, two citizens and a drummer, alighted. Johnny sat up with a jerk and batted unbelieving eyes. For the two citizens were Bale Harper and Tom Keen.

The drummer sat down on a bench beside the door of the store and mopped a bald and shining head. Harper and Keen went into the nearer of the two saloons. It seemed to Johnny that Keen held his right shoulder a trifle stiffly.

Johnny took thought a moment. Then he shoved his hat forward, rose to his feet and crossed the road to the saloon. Harper and Keen were standing at the bar. They did not turn at his entrance. Johnny walked quietly up to Keen and slapped him heartily on the right shoulder. Keen uttered a grunt of pain, and whirled like a cat, his right hand dropping to his holster. But his clutching fingers gripped not the smooth wood of the butt. Instead they encountered the back of Johnny's out-flung left hand.

"Whatsa matter?" demanded Johnny, with a grin. "Whatcha tryin' to pull a gun on me for? Don'tcha know me?"

"Well, whadja crack me on the shoulder for?" grumbled Keen peevishly.

"Yuh'll have to excuse me," said Johnny with wide innocent eyes. "I didn't know yore shoulder was sore."

"It ain't," Keen denied hastily. "I don't like folks to be so —— abrupt, that's all."

Mr. Harper looked his wall-eyed surprise at Johnny's *gaucherie* and nodded curtly in acknowledgment of the stray man's greeting. Johnny, abating his waiting watchfulness not at all, suggested drinks. Mr. Harper and Mr. Keen accepted the invitation. They drank, employing, as etiquette required, their right hands, but Johnny used his left. No one appeared to observe the solecism, even when Johnny repeated it at the next round. At the third round Johnny, pleading a disordered stomach, took a cigar.

Messrs. Harper and Keen, muttering something about seeing Johnny later, went away. Johnny, lounging with his best air of carelessness at a corner window, saw the two enter the store. Later he saw them leave, carrying no visible parcels, and go into the other saloon. Which place, as set forth on a misspelt sign, accommodated travelers. Johnny threw his cigar butt at a transient dog and shuffled dispiritedly across to the store.

"My friend get his liniment all right?" he gloomily asked the storekeeper.

"Liniment!" repeated that worthy. "They didn't get no liniment. They bought cartridges and carbolic salve."

"Salve," Johnny echoed vacantly. "Oh, yeah, yeah, I thought it was liniment—for a hoss. Gimme four bags tobacco, a box o' matches, papers, an' one box o' cartridges, 45-90."

He departed, stuffing his purchases into various pockets, and rejoined the station agent. The railroad man found him a grievously unamusing companion. He could not, of course, be aware that Johnny was speculating as to the proper moment for entering the saloon that accommodated travelers.

Some twenty minutes later Johnny came alive with startling suddenness, slid to his feet, hitched up his chaps, and walked out stiff-legged, his elbows bent. The agent gazed after him in amazement.

"That's shore a funny jigger," he remarked to the relay. "I wonder now is he crazy or somethin'."

Johnny crow-hopped to the other saloon. As he went he sang the heartening and well-known ballad, "Buena Vista Battlefield."

> I am her only cherished child,
> But tell her that I died
> Rejoicing that she taught me young
> To take my country's side.

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At the tail of the cheery lines he leaned against the bar, and wagged a solemn forefinger at the bartender.

> But, comrade, there's one more—
> She's gentle as a fawn,
> She lives upon the slopin' hill
> That overlooks the lawn.

He broke off and gravely eyed the bartender.

"That's one sad song," he asserted, grinning widely. "Always makes me feel like I was gettin' over one —— uva good drunk. Gimme a see-gar, a good see-gar. Trot out every box yuh got."

There were ten boxes from which to choose, and Johnny was frowning over the selection when Mister Harper and Mister Keen passed through on their way to the street. Johnny moved quickly and caught them at the door.

"Been looking for you gents!" he cried amiably. "Have a drink, just to show they's no hard feelin's."

The two men promptly turned about and draped themselves against the bar.

"Name yore calf-killer," invited Johnny, placing himself beside Tom Keen.

Johnny sipped down a scant one finger—a disordered stomach must not be abused—and wrinkled a thoughtful nose. There was about Mr. Keen a distinct and penetrating aroma of carbolic salve. Johnny mentally slapped a swelling chest.

When Messrs. Harper and Keen had gone he bit his cigar and smoked complacently. Somehow the heat was not so oppressive. It was a fine large day, and the pathway through the wilderness was beginning to straighten and shed its obstacles.

AT NOON came Sheriff Stahl's deputy, Jack Murgatroyd. The silent, swarthy man put his horse in the stage station corral, left his saddle with the station-boss, and spent four unsociable hours sitting on a crate, waiting for No 6, the eastbound train. When the train arrived, fifty minutes late, the deputy boarded the smoker.

The stamp of hoofs and the squeak and jingle of harness followed the bell-clangor of the departing train. The northbound stage was being hooked up. Johnny strolled casually to where Whisky Jim stood leaning against a wheel, examining the buckskin popper of his long bull whip.

"Did Bale an' Tom ride with yuh all the way from Marysville, Jim?" inquired Johnny, in a tone that would not have carried twenty feet.

"They did not," replied the driver. "I picked 'em up six mile south o' Bubblin' Creek."

"Kind o' funny place to be afoot—this weather."

"They said their hosses was run off in the night. I guess—aw right, Bill? Say, what'd I tell yuh about a blind bridle on that off leader? Well, that's all right, too. I'm the one that's gotta drive 'em. Next time you use a open one. So long, Johnny."

The stage lurched away northward in a thick cloud of dust. Johnny glanced under his hat brim at the porch of the store. Harper and Keen were sitting on the porch, their heels cocked up on the low railing.

"Now I guess," said Johnny to himself, "they won't find out from Whisky what I asked him—not yet awhile."

The night brought Laguerre and the better part of the bushwhackers' two horses, a tall and rawboned red.

"Whadja do with the other hoss?" asked Johnny.

"Turn him loose un leave de saddle on de heel aftair I see dem go away een de stage," answered the half-breed. "Bot' dem men here, huh?"

"Shore. An' they're the ones all right. Now listen hard, Telescope. I gotta li'l scheme I wanna work on Bale an' Tom tomorrow. They didn't see yuh sift in, so it'll be a kind o' surprise for 'em. She's thisaway."

Laguerre listened delightedly. Johnny's little scheme promised sport after his own heart.

In the morning Johnny contrived to eat breakfast with Harper and Keen. Johnny was the first to finish and stood in the doorway looking out upon a dusty world. He heard the scrape of pushed-out chairs, and raised his hand to his hat and held it there a moment. As at a signal Laguerre rode out from behind the chute at the railroad corral. His mount was the tall and rawboned red, and he was heading toward the hotel. Harper and Keen stepped past Johnny into the open air. They halted with great suddenness and he saw their backs stiffen. Then they started to walk on.

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"Wait a shake, gents," he urged quietly. "There's a friend o' mine bringin' up a hoss for you to look at."

Messrs. Harper and Keen stopped and faced Johnny. Harper, blessed with a wall-eye, was enabled to observe without difficulty both Johnny and the approaching rider. Tom Keen stared woodenly at Johnny Ramsay. No one looking at the latter could have surmised that he expected to kill or be killed within the next few minutes. His attitude was easy, his voice a drawl. Chance might well have hooked his thumb in his belt so that the palm of the hand almost touched the butt of the six-shooter.

"I heard yore hosses got run off the other night," Johnny continued in his pleasant voice, "an' Telescope he found this cayuse walkin' the trail on his high lonesome right after his own hoss was downed by road-agents. Providential, I call it. Shore saved him a long walk or a wait. But I remembered seein' Bale ridin' a hoss like this here one once, so I told Telescope—he remembered, too."

Harper and Keen made no comment. They continued to stare. Johnny made a mental bet with himself that they would go after their guns before Laguerre crossed the street. He lost. Tom Keen raised arms, locked his hands behinds his ears and teetered back and forth on his toes. His eyes left Johnny's face and gazed interestedly upon Laguerre and his mount. Bale Harper cradled his right elbow in the palm of his left hand, gently caressed his stubbly chin, and critically focused first one eye and then the other on the half-breed.

Laguerred checked his horse at a distance of ten yards. He smiled between the pony's ears at the two men from Paradise Bend. It was an open smile, and showed most of the white teeth below the stubby black mustache. But it was not a particularly pleasant smile.

"Mornin'," said Laguerre, his nod barely perceptible. "Johnny say you lose you hoss, Bale. Dees heem?"

"Now," thought Johnny, the fingers of his right hand curling downward ever so slightly.

He meant to shoot through the bottom of his holster. All was in readiness for the climax. But Mr. Harper did not play up. He still caressed his stubbly chin. And now he shook his head.

"That ain't my hoss," he declared firmly. "My hoss was a rangy red all right, but his legs was different, an' he was wider between the eyes, an' his tail was longer by five-six inches. ——, I wish he was my hoss," he added regretfully, and moved off, followed by Tom Keen.

"Wouldn't that make yuh sick?" Johnny observed, when he and Laguerre were sitting on a foundation beam beneath the tank. "I shore thought we had 'em."

"Sheees sleeck," said the half-breed, and blew smoke through his nostrils. "Guess eet was you heet Tom aftair all—only a small leetle graze. Me, I geet heem good or not a-tall mabbeso."

He smiled at his friend in a way that robbed the words of their sting, and Johnny laughed.

"He ain't hit hard," he admitted. "All the same, I was watchin' him when he put his hands behind his head an' his eyelids wiggled. Hurt him all right. He just done it for —— aimin' to show they wasn't no nicks on him. Guess he must think they ain't no smell to carbolic salve. Whatsa matter?"

Laguerre lifted his lowered head.

"Cavalry comin'," he said.

Men powdered with dust, the horses caked and sweating, the Fort Yardley cavalry rode into Damson with a brave jingle of curbchains and clink of slung carbines. The red-head rode beside the first lieutenant. In the rear the corporal drove his mules. He looked unhappy.

As the troop passed the water-tank the red-head glanced sidewise at Johnny and Laguerre.

"Howdy," he called and smiled and flung up a friendly hand.

The moon-faced major saw them, too, but he gave no sign of recognition. The troop clicked across the rails and made camp in a grove of cottonwoods a quarter-mile beyond.

Johnny and Laguere looked at each other. Above their heads the windmill that supplied water to the tank squeaked solemnly. At regular intervals it groaned and rattled, but it never stopped while the wind blew. Happy, happy windmill! No cause for it to worry. It had no vexatious problems. All it had to do was whirl and turn and pump day in, day out . . . .

"But the —— thing can't travel," muttered Johnny.

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"Huh?" Laguerre lifted inquiring eyebrows.

"Djuh notice how the red-head didn't pay no attention to Bale an' Tom?" Johnny said hastily. "An' they was sittin' over there in plain sight."

He nodded toward the store. Laguerre grunted and drew a match along the sole of his boot.

"She dunno dem mabbeso," he observed, when his second cigaret was burning well. "I t'ink dat long tam, me."

"There yuh go, tryin' to start a argument," complained Johnny. "Ain't yuh never satisfied? Le's go in an' ride the agent 'round his collar."

So they went in and deviled the lonely agent, but the amusement palled. Laguerre wandered off to make friends with the cook in the saloon where the traveler was accommodated, and Johnny trundled over to the stage station and helped the station-boss oil harness till the dish-pan clanged for supper.

The next day nothing happened. Nor the next, nor the next, nor the next after that. The cavalrymen loafed in their camp, exercised their mounts, and got drunk on occasion. The red-head hung about town. So did Harper and Keen.

ON THE sixth day the red-head scraped acquaintance with Harper and Keen. He accomplished this publicly, when Johnny and Laguerre were within a scant five yards. The most unbiased of spectators would have known by the red-head's manner that he had never till that moment so much as heard of Messrs. Harper and Keen.

"He's a fox, that feller," said Johnny, talking it over later with the half-breed. "'Camp's my name,' says he. 'Barry Camp,' says he, 'an' where can a feller pick up a likely bunch o' hosses, an' let's all have a drink an' be sociable,' an' we did an' we was an' all the time he spread it on thick as plaster on a wall."

"We have watch all t'ree—dey have not talk togedder teel today."

"An' yet I'll go yuh fifty to two bits he knowed all about yore brush with them two inside o' twenty-four hours after he pulled in. A likely bunch o' hosses, huh. He didn't say nothin' about no hosses up in Sunset County, not that I knows of. No, he was goin' to Seymour City, he was. Looks like he was shore in a hurry to get there, don't it?"

The red-head continued to remain in Damson. So did Harper and Keen. Four times a day Laguerre told Johnny that they were wasting their time.

At the end of ten days Johnny began to feel that there might be a basis of fact for Laguerre's statements, but he was too stubborn to say so. There was wrangling and language.

In the afternoon of the eleventh day the monotony was broken by the red-head's riding out with the first lieutenant. Johnny promptly got his horse and trailed them. The pair, riding slowly, fetched an aimless circle 'round Damson and rode in at dusk.

The following day the maneuver was repeated. What lay behind this strange passion for riding with the military? That evening he and Laguerre, arguing the matter, almost quarreled.

On the thirteenth day the red-head left his horse in the corral and sat with the first lieutenant on the porch of the store. Johnny perched in sullen loneliness on an empty whisky keg up-ended in the shade of the station, did not lift his eyes when the stage from the Bend rolled in. He was endeavoring to concentrate on the problem in hand and making a very boggy ford of it. His thoughts persisted in reverting to Paradise Bend and two of the inhabitants thereof.

He just knew, so he did, that the gambler was riding with Dorothy every single day. They might even be married by this time. It was a shame. A nice girl like Dorothy certainly deserved a better fate. In after years Slay would probably beat her. He looked like that kind of man, and Johnny had heard him speak very roughly to his sister. Johnny began to get quite worked up about it. Which state of mind was the most serious attack yet.

"If she ain't took him by the time I get back," he told himself, "I'll settle it. No two ways about it. I'll just make the break and marry her myself. I've been thinkin' about it long enough. Now I'll do it. Dorothy has gotta be saved."

"What are you muttering about?" asked a laughing voice.

Johnny looked up dazedly into the amused face of Mrs. Wallace. All in dust-colored silk, a parasol of the same shade

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and material slanting across her shoulder, she tilted her beautiful chin and laughed at him frankly.

"I've been watching you ever since I stepped out of the stage," she said, shifting the broad black ribbons of a jet-embroidered reticule to the hollow of her arm, "and you've done nothing but nod your head and mutter away at a great rate. Been here long?"

"Ab-bub-bout two weeks," stuttered Johnny, dragging off his hat and getting to his feet.

"Those strayed Flying-M horses are the most ambitious animals I ever heard of," she said, the brilliant smile hardening a trifle. "How many miles is it from here to the Dogsoldier?"

"Oh, Scotty's got lots o' other jobs besides hosses he sends his men on," parried Johnny. "Yuh'd be surprised," he pursued warming to his subject, "at the amount of business Scotty has. He's very broad-minded that way."

He put on his hat and beamed upon her, his active brain busily conjecturing as to the reason for her presence. She continued to smile till the smile grew fixed. Then it faded, and her mouth-corners drooped and she sighed.

"I suppose the train's late again," she murmured plaintively. "It always is."

"I'll find out. Which one?"

"No. 6. I'm going to Piegan City."

When he returned with the glad tidings that No. 6, for the first time in many months, was on time, Mrs. Wallace was sitting on the whisky keg. Her glistening silk billowed about her—it was one of those years when skirts were *bouffant* to distraction. Her reticule lay in her lap. Her hands were demurely folded on the handle of her parasol.

"On time? How nice," said she, glancing at a tiny watch. "Then I've only an hour to wait. You may sit there on the softest plank in the flooring and amuse me if you like. I'm bored stiff. I wish I could smoke."

"Everybody's lookin' now," grinned Johnny, "an' they'd all stand on their li'l ears if yuh did."

He sat down cross-legged on the edge of the platform and fished out the makings.

"I'm a-goin' to tantalize yuh," he observed with a smile.

"You do," she told him simply.

"Huh?" He stared, thumb poised in the act of snapping a match alight.

She leaned forward, chin supported on her knuckles, her dark and brilliant eyes holding his.

"I wonder if you know how much," she said softly.

A lieutenant from the cavalry camp, striding 'round the corner of the building, almost fell over the lady. He snatched off his hat and, stammering apology, backed off with hopeful slowness. But the radiant vision on the whisky keg ignored his existence. She continued to gaze upon Johnny.

"I—I dunn—" began Johnny feebly, and stopped and ran a bewildered finger 'round the inside of his collar.

"I wish you'd be my friend," she persisted wistfully.

"I am!" he assured her hastily, and stood upon his feet. "Where's yore bag, Mis' Wallace? Y'ain't a-goin' to Piegan with just that thing?" He indicated the reticule. "Tell me where it's at, an' I'll get it for yuh."

"I told Whisky Jim to bring it when he finished with his team. He's fetching it now. Do sit down."

Johnny looked at the approaching stage-driver and sat down. Whisky Jim reverently set down the bag at the lady's side, was sweetly thanked, and returned whence he came. Johnny thought he'd better try again.

"I gotta go see Telescope," he announced briskly, and arose.

"Are you afraid of me?" she demanded, and caught her lower lip between her teeth and gazed at him out of the corners of her eyes.

"Why, Mis' Wallace," he exclaimed, with what he intended should pass for a hearty laugh. "Why, Mis' Wallace—" He gulped miserably and hitched up his chaps.

"You may call me Lotta—if you like."

"Why—uh—thanks."

"You're welcome."

There was the barest flicker of mirth about her mouth, and then she sighed quite deeply, and looked away from him, and then looked back, and said—

"I need a good, true friend."

Johnny felt the hot and cold flushes skimming the flesh of him. He was horribly uncomfortable and more than a little annoyed. Strange that this should be when in the Bend he had thoroughly enjoyed

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philandering with Mrs. Wallace. He did not take thought as to the reason. He hadn't time. Mrs. Wallace was speaking.

"I'm in great trouble—Johnny."

The dark eyes begged, appealed. The red lips parted in a tremulous smile. No action could have bettered her pose.

The cavalry lieutenant, furtively watching from a corner of the railroad corral, ground his teeth.

"A lady!" he burbled to the nearest post. "A lady! Divinity, by gad! Hobnobbing with a beastly cowboy! Pearls—pearls before punchers!"

The officer was well out of earshot, of course, and could not be expected to know that Johnny would have delightedly paid real money for the privilege of changing places with him.

"Trouble," repeated Johnny. "Trouble. You tell me who the gent is an' I'll shore make him hard to find."

"Oh, it's not that—that is, not exactly. I—when are you coming back to the Bend, Johnny?"

"I dunno—tomorrow—next week—next month—can't tell."

"So long as that." The red mouth drooped.

"Well, yuh see——"

"Yes, I know you're awfully busy," she cut in, "but—but I need some one I can trust, and, Johnny, I think I can trust you—I *know* I can trust you. I suppose you think I ought not to bother you," she went on forlornly, her graceful head bent, "that I should go to my brother, but—but brothers don't always understand."

He nodded.

"Whadda yuh want me to do?" he asked, his eyes on the little pulse throbbing in her smooth throat.

"I can't tell you now," she said. "There isn't time. Wait till I come back."

"I may not be here then."

"It doesn't matter. I don't need your help here. I need it in the Bend."

The tiny pulse was beating rapidly. The smooth cheeks were flushed. There was a pitiful little catch in her voice.

"Whatever you say goes," Johnny told her. "But how'll I know——"

"Oh, I'll tell you in the Bend. I'll tell you everything when you come to see me. And you will come, won't you, just so soon as ever you strike town?"

"Shore will."

"I—I hope you won't regret it." The trouble in the dark eyes was very real.

"I guess I won't," Johnny said easily, thankful for a sudden humming of the rails. "There she comes," he added, and a deep and distant whistle whooped its warning.

MRS. WALLACE stood up. From her silken knees to the ground the jet-embroidered reticule slid, and landed on the planking with a solid thump. The lady stooped, but Johnny was the quicker. He scooped up the reticule and handed it to her. It was surprisingly heavy, that reticule. Johnny did not know that powder-puffs and cold-cream jars hefted like that. The thing weighed ten or twelve pounds at least. Perhaps there was a gun in it. But somehow, when he lifted it, the contents had not the feel of a six-shooter. Besides, a revolver only weighed a light two and a half pounds or so.

Mrs. Wallace took the reticule and thanked him and slipped the broad ribbons over her arm. Johnny picked up her bag. And the bag was heavy, too. True, it was a generous bag, broad and long and high, but even so . . . .

With a clanging grind and hiss of wheels and brakes the long eastbound pulled in. Johnny saw Mrs. Wallace into the Pullman, handed her bag to the porter and hopped off as the train started. But, changing his mind on the instant, he hopped on again. He calmly made his swaying way through four day-coaches to the smoker, where he hunched down in an empty seat and watched the scenery drift by.

"She ain't a-goin' to Piegan City for the trip," he told himself. "I'd shore admire to know what made them bags so heavy."

It was night when the train clanked across the switches of Piegan City's four side-tracks. Johnny dropped off the smoker as the engine slid past the section-house, and was standing beside a pile of ties beyond the range of the station lights when the train stopped.

He watched Mrs. Wallace descend from the Pullman and go into the express office, followed by the porter with her bag. Johnny sauntered across the tracks to the platform outside the express office and sat down on a hand-truck. Through an open window he could see the express office and all that went on therein.

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He saw the bag lying on the counter. He saw Mrs. Wallace open first the bag and then the reticule, take from the former six, and from the latter two, little square packages, and slide them across the counter to the express agent. The man made out a receipt, handed it to Mrs. Wallace, and carried the eight packages to the safe and twirled the combination on them. The lady picked up her bag and crossed the street to the hotel.

"They's money or dust in them eight li'l boxes," concluded Johnny. "That's what made the two bags so heavy. They's a Wells-Fargo office in the Bend. From the Bend here is one long trip for a lady. Puzzle—find the joker."

Johnny stretched out his legs and looked about him. Beyond the hotel, between a drug-store and the Star Saloon a transparency proclaimed the presence of a restaurant. But he wasn't very hungry yet, not so hungry as he would be later. He decided to wait.

While he waited, the telegraph operator —he was likewise the station agent—the yellow envelope of a telegram in his hand, flat-footed across to the Star and pushed through the swinging doors. He came out almost immediately and returned to his duties. Johnny heard him shifting boxes and cases in the freight shed.

A man came out of the Star Saloon and went into the hotel. And the man was no stranger. He was that sharp-faced citizen of Paradise Bend, Bale Harper's brother Spill.

"'Sfunny," muttered Johnny. —— funny. What's he doin' here?"

He considered it even funnier when, within five minutes, Spill emerged from the hotel doorway with another man, the lean and craggy ex-station-boss, Skinny Devinney. The two parted in front of the Star, Spill to enter the saloon, Skinny to cross to the station. After a time Johnny heard him ask, above the complaining of the skinned wood, that the agent "Send this now." A box dropped with a crash, and there was silence in the freight shed. From the office came the staccato clicking of the sounder. Johnny wished he could read Morse.

"That's one odd number," he said to himself. "Skinny sendin' telegrams."

Skinny strolled from the office and walked scuffingly back to the Star. Johnny continued to occupy his truck and ruminate on the strangeness of life.

Came No. 5 with a flaring cyclopean eye and rows of lighted windows and a whiff of cooking food from the diner's kitchen that made Johnny really hungry. When No. 5 was gone away westward Johnny betook himself to the restaurant. But before entering the place he removed his six-shooter from his holster, shoved it down inside the waistband of his trousers and carefully pulled down his vest over the protruding butt.

For there was a marshal in Piegan City, a curious person with notions about the masses not wearing firearms in public, notions he was more than willing to uphold with enthusiasm and both his guns. Johnny was always glad to please a marshal—when it did not interfere with business. In this case Johnny could see himself handing his gun across the bar of the nearest saloon. With Spill and Skinny and Lord knew who-all infesting the landscape, he could indeed.

He made an excellent meal in the restaurant, then went out and stood on the sidewalk, wondering what to do next.

"I could 'a' gone back on No. 5," he grumbled. "I might as well, too. I don't guess that Lotta is goin' to do anythin'."

At this juncture the lady herself issued from the hotel and walked along the sidewalk toward him. Johnny did not particularly care whether Skinny or Spill saw him, but he decidedly did not wish to have Mrs. Wallace know that he had followed her. He modestly withdrew to the deep shadows between two buildings. Mrs. Wallace passed without seeing him and entered the drug-store. Johnny went across to the station and his hand-truck.

Whoo-up. The whistle came from the west. By its shrillness he knew it to be the whistle of a freight engine. It was a freight engine, one of those speedy Moguls, and it was pulling a short train of twenty cars of sheep for the Chicago stock yards.

"—— woollies," sniffed Johnny, turning up a scornful nose at the blatting pests.

The Mogul stopping for water, and the train being a short one, the caboose ground to a standstill opposite where Johnny was sitting. Before the wheels ceased to turn a frock-coated man hurried down the steps and into the station. Johnny took a long breath and expelled it slowly.

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"They'll all be here soon," he murmured. Who's next?"

The new arrival was the owner of the Broken Dollar, and there was wrath in the way he swung his shoulders. Johnny arose and edged toward the door of the waiting-room. He was barely in time to hear the station agent say, "I think the lady went to the hotel," when Slay strode through the doorway and, without looking to the right or left, made his purposeful way to the hotel.

"He's shore all het up over somethin'," said Johnny, peering across the platform of the caboose. "Yessir, he's one mad man, that feller."

Slay came out of the hotel quicker than he went in. Coat-tails flying, he hurried up the street to the drugstore. He entered, emerging a few minutes later with Mrs. Wallace. The two walked off together down the street. Their progress was slow, for Mrs. Wallace dawdled.

"Gettin' madder an' madder," observed Johnny. "See him stamp his foot."

It was patent that the gambler was in a fine temper. He took a cigar from his pocket, bit the end, then promptly flung away the cigar, and jammed his hands deep down in his trousers pocket.

Mrs. Wallace made as if to turn in at the doorway of the hotel, but her brother caught her by the elbow and said something that Johnny could not catch. The two walked on down the street. In this direction lay the Y track and the sidings, where stood strings of boxes and gondolas.

"I don't like the look o' that?" said Johnny. "He's mad—an' bad."

Johnny thoughtfully slid 'round the tail of the caboose, and walked down the track toward the sidings. He dodged in behind a box-car and, crouching, looked between the wheels toward Main Street. Those two figures dark against the scattered lights—there they were. They were still coming in his direction. Now they had stopped—now they were coming on. They had stopped again. Their voices were only a murmur. He wished they would come closer.

They didn't, so he tiptoed toward them, feeling his way along the edge of the box-car. The slag ballast was crunchy, but he was careful. He negotiated the length of three cars, two boxes and a gondola, and dared go no further. He could hear quite well, anyhow.

"It is mine to do with as I choose," the lady was saying.

"We'll talk about that later," averred Slay. "You were trying to go away—that's what you were trying to do."

"If I'd meant to do that, I wouldn't have been satisfied to merely try—I'd have done it. You simpleton, do you suppose I'd stop here and wait for you to catch me! Honestly, at times I believe you think you possess all the brains in the family."

"You were going to leave me." The man was doggedly insistent.

"I wasn't." Impatiently.

"You were. You're lying."

A pause. Then—

"That's the first time you ever said that to me."

"I'll say more than that to you if I feel like it. You're coming back with me tomorrow."

"Am I?"

"You are."

"Are you holding my arm to make sure? You hurt. Let go, or I'll slap you!"

HE EVIDENTLY did not let go, for almost instantly somebody's face was slapped—hard. Followed then the stinging crack of another smack, a choked scream, and the soft thump of a fallen body. The next moment, Slay, bending over Mrs. Wallace, saw a great light and strange constellations as he was knocked flat by a smashing blow on the back of the head. For him the great light and the constellations were but momentary. They vanished and black unconsciousness took their place before his forehead struck the ground.

Johnny returned to his waistband the gun with whose long barrel he had rapped the gambler, and stepped over the sprawling legs to Mrs. Wallace. The lady was sitting up, supporting herself on her arm. Her hat was over one ear. Her black hair was pulled loose across her white forehead. Slowly she lifted a hand and felt of her cheek.

"He struck me," she whispered. "He struck me."

Johnny slipped his hands under her armpits.

"Get up," he said, and pulled her to her feet.

She twisted, swaying, in his arms, and looked into his face.

"How—how did you get here?" she demanded hysterically, her hands clutching the flannel of his sleeves.

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"I just come," he told her, "an' a good thing, too."

She dropped on her knees beside her brother, felt of his heart and listened to his labored breathing.

"How badly is he hurt?" she asked.

"He'll come to in maybe half an hour or so," answered Johnny, feeling with untender fingers the good-sized bump on Slay's head. "I didn't him hard's I could. He's all right. Don't you worry about him. It's yourself yuh gotta be thinkin' of." Again he slipped his hands under her armpits and set her on her feet. "Now you get a grip on yore nerve an' go back to the hotel. No use yore bein' around when he comes to. An' tomorrow you hit the grit out o' here—east for choice, the further the better. I'll fix it so's he won't try to stop yuh."

"You needn't," she said and shook her disheveled head.

"Why, I thought—" he began.

"I suppose so. How long were you listening?"

"I told yuh I just come. 'Sno use talkin' about it. I'll fix——"

"I said you needn't once. I'm returning to the Bend tomorrow—with him."

"But——"

"I know. He accused me of lying and then struck me. Humiliating, I admit. I don't think he'll do either again."

"Yuh'd better go, ma'am—east, or south, or west. It don't matter, so yuh go. It'll be healthier, yuh hear me tellin' yuh."

"Why will it be healthier—because of possible beatings?"

"Not exactly. Because—look here, you take my word an' skip on No. 6 tomorrow."

She gave him a long, steady look.

"What have I done?" she asked quietly.

"I dunno nothin' about yuh—not a thing. I don't wanta know. I've told yuh all I'm aimin' to tell yuh. If yo're agoin' back to the Bend with him tomorrow yuh'd better go to the hotel an' get some sleep. I'd kind o' square up my hat an' push the hair out o' my eyes first, if I was you. No use havin' them fellers in the hotel think anythin'."

"What are you going to do?" she asked, her fingers busy with her hair.

"I'm agoin' to have a li'l talk with him."

"Is that all?"

"Shore."

"Do you give me your word that's all you mean to do?"

"That's a funny question to ask."

"Do you?"

"If it'll do yuh any good I'll give yuh my word it's all I mean to do now—tonight."

"Now—tonight! Why do you specify tonight?"

"Because in this country yuh never know what'll happen tomorrow. I never like to make promises more'n twenty-four hours ahead. You run along now an' be happy. He won't be asleep much longer."

"I guess I'll stay," she told him stubbornly. "I'll—I'll take what comes."

He stared at her helplessly. It is a sufficiently difficult thing to instruct a man in the proper treatment of a sister without having that sister in sight and hearing. He might in the process be compelled to throw a gun on the gambler. Why couldn't she be reasonable and go? He scowled down at her and wondered what to do.

From the station then came a faint shout. Johnny saw the operator dash out and sprint across the tracks, yelling at every jump. He was not yelling yells either. He was saying something, and it sounded like—

"Hold-up!"

"You can stay with him if yo're a mind to," he said crossly. "If yuh don't wanna lemme talk to him, all right, I won't. I'm goin' to see what's up."

He ran toward the lights of Main Street and pushed into the Star Saloon. There was an excited crowd in the Star. It centered about the operator, and everybody was talking at once.

"Diamond, huh? How much? Anybody downed? Fifty thousand dollars! No. 5—where's the sheriff? How many men? Had pack-hosses shore—betcha it's that Fort Creek County gang. Nicked the paymaster huh? Fifty thousand o' Gov'ment money is one man's-size haul!"

Thus the Piegan citizens *ad lib.*

CHAPTER XXI

TELEGRAMS

THE engineer of No. 5, the flyer that had passed through Piegan City just before Johnny went to his supper, had seen the board set against him at Diamond,

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a siding and demounted box-car station sixty miles west of Piegan City. Thereupon he had stopped his train, had been incontinently boarded by armed, masked men who had uncoupled the mail, express, and baggage-cars from the remainder of the train and forced him to haul the three cars a mile farther into a deep cut.

Incidentally this business was not accomplished without bloodshed, the Army paymaster being badly wounded. At the cut there was more trouble. The robbers put too much dynamite in the charge they employed for shattering the door of the baggage-car and blew the baggage-man to pieces with his car and many trunks.

Then they were more careful and used a lighter charge in attacking the express-car. They blew in the end and side doors simultaneously and shot the fighting messenger and one of the paymaster's guards to pieces and badly wounded the other guard.

Then they had taken the sacks containing the Government money and three other sacks consigned to Sun River and, after rooting awhile among the widely scattered bits of baggage, departed, five horsemen and six pack-horses, toward the south.

Débris from the wrecked baggage-car covered the line so thickly that the engine could not back through it, so the fireman ran all the way to Diamond. It is to be presumed he ran quickly. Arriving with his story he found the demoralized train crew searching for the telegraph operator.

They finally found him, gagged, bound with strips torn out of his own trousers, lying in the brush behind the station. On releasing him it was learned that the wires had been cut. Not only that, they had been cut in two places, and the lengths between removed. But the operator was an ingenious person. He strapped on his climbing irons, cut a length from a commercial wire and repaired the break in the railroad wire. Such was the story of the Diamond hold-up gleaned in disjointed scraps by Johnny in the Star Saloon.

Johnny was of the opinion that it was the work of the Fort Creek County outfit, and he did not believe that they would ride south very far. They would double back within a few hours, if not sooner.

Johnny looked speculatively at the men in the saloon. Jack Murgatroyd, popping up from nowhere, was helping the local deputy organize a posse. Spill Harper and Skinny Devinney were raucously to the fore. They would ride in the posse, y'betcha. It was with a smooth brow but an exceedingly wrinkled mind that Johnny nodded to the two men. The nod they accorded him was equally brief. He thought he detected in Skinny Devinney's eyes a startled look, but he could not be sure. Jack Murgatroyd pushed his way to Johnny's side.

"Comin' with us, Johnny?" he asked. "They've wired for an engine an' box-cars for our hosses. We'd ought to be at Diamond in less'n two hours."

"I ain't got a hoss," said Johnny.

"I'll get yuh one."

"All right." Indifferently.

Jack Murgatroyd went out and up the street. Johnny went out and across the tracks. He wanted to be alone and think. The hand-truck was his seat for the next twenty minutes. Then he went into the station. The operator was alone. Piegan City was busy with its posse.

"Shore is a fright what them hold-ups are doin'," he observed, leaning against the ticket-window.

The operator agreed profanely.

"It's none o' my business, stranger," continued Johnny, "but would yuh mind tellin' me where that telegram went yuh sent awhile back—the one that skinny feller wrote, Skinny Devinney's his name?"

The operator stared.

"We're not allowed—" he began.

"I know all that," nodded Johnny, "but I got one good reason for askin'. Can't yuh guess?"

The operator was not a fool.

"There wasn't anything in that telegram," he told Johnny. "It was only about some stock, cattle, that's all."

"Wasn't it sent to Diamond?" persisted Johnny. "Knowed it," he added when the operator nodded. "Who got it?"

"Say, who are you?"

"Me, I'm just a stranger in a strange land, but I'm a heap interested in this li'l hold-up. I wish you was."

The operator hesitated.

"This is against the rules," he said after a short minute. "I'd lose my job if it got out, but I'm willing to take a chance on you. The telegram was addressed to Mose Peters at Diamond, and it read: 'Ship five cows today.' He signed it 'Devinney.' "

"About ten minutes before he sent it

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didn't a man named Harper get a telegram, an' didn't that telegram come from Damson?"

"You know quite a lot."

"Didn't it?"

"Yep, and it said: 'Lost five hundred dollars. Send money today.' It was signed 'Barry Camp.' "

Johnny, pondering hard and rapidly, went out on the platform and saw Slay and Mrs. Wallace going into the hotel. Slay's walk was uncertain. Johnny smiled slightly, but his face sobered almost at once.

"Li'l fool," he said to himself, "why couldn't she be sensible an' take a man's warnin'. I wonder if she'll tell him who hit him."

Probably she wouldn't, but if she did, Johnny was ready, very ready. He had been ready a long time.

When the wired-for engine and the box-cars arrived, the sheriff of Piegan County, a long person named Stevens, came with them. The horses of the posse were loaded aboard the two box-cars at the railroad chute, the members climbed into the caboose, and the train pulled out.

AT TWO o'clock in the morning they were unloading their horses at Diamond. The Pullmans and day-coaches of No. 5 still stood before the tiny station. Disconsolate and peevish passengers—none of them had been robbed, but passengers are never satisfied—roamed aimlessly about.

The wrecking train from the west was not due for three hours, the operator told Johnny, and the wrecked express-car and the mail-car, blocked by the débris of the baggage-car, were still where they were at the time of the accident.

Johnny was glad of these things. While the posse crowded close and listened to Sheriff Stevens and Jack Murgatroyd fire questions at the fagged operator, Johnny oozed quietly to one side, got his horse, and rode westward along the tracks.

He had not proceeded three hundred yards when he was overtaken by another member of the posse, an elderly citizen with a bushy white beard and eyes that looked sleepy but were not.

"Guess I'll traipse along with you, Mister Ramsay," announced the other. "Bill Stevens is all right, but he shore likes to gas. Last year I lost forty head o' stock 'cause Bill he done more talkin' than ridin'. Jack Murgatroyd looks good."

There was the faintest emphasis in the world placed on the word "looks."

"Bein' a deputy ain't no cinch," defended Johnny.

"It seems to be in Fort Creek County," observed the elderly citizen. "Leastawise, whadda they do? Hold-ups alla time."

"This one o' that outfit's jobs?" queried Johnny.

"Whadda you think?"

"I think they headed south 'cause they was goin' north or northwest."

"You'n' me seem to think alike. Guess maybe yuh'll find them five road-agents in Fort Creek some'ers—if yuh do find 'em."

The elderly citizen's name was Harmer. He and a friend owned a ranch two days' ride east of Piegan City. Just luck his being in town and so in a position to go with the posse, he had confided to Johnny during the ride from Piegan City. Now he went on to speak of his friend, said friend being mine-crazy, ever neglecting the ranch to go on prospecting trips.

"He's up there in Fort Creek County now," said Harmer, "scoutin' 'round for his mine, the mine that'll make us both millionaires. I'd rather make my millions out o' cattle. But don'tcha get the idea Tom Lander ain't all right," he added loyally. "It's just he's got a notion about mines, an' outside o' that he's a human bein' an' my friend, an' nobody's a-goin' to say anythin' again' him while I'm around."

Harmer gazed truculently at Johnny, and the latter nodded sympathetically. He understood. A man with friends must of necessity put up with a great deal.

The two men were halted fifty yards from the cars by a voice, a nervous voice with quavers in it.

"You come any closer," the voice assured them, "and I'll shoot."

"Don't do it," called Harmer. "We ain't movin'."

"What'sa matter with you?" demanded Johnny. "We belong to the posse. Who are yuh, anyway?"

But the voice refused to be comforted no matter what was said and kept them standing till the east lightened and it was day. Then Johnny and Harmer saw, framed in the end doorway of the mail-car, two white-faced mail-clerks each holding one of those viciously lethal weapons known as riot-guns.

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"When yo're quite satisfied we ain't aimin' to rustle the mail," cried Johnny with some heat, "yuh might point them howitzers o' yours another way. We come up here for evidence, an' we ain't got all the time they is. Every minute the road-agents are gettin' farther away."

"I tell you one thing, gents," the petulant Harmer broke in, "if yuh wasn't workin' for Uncle Sam I'd 'a' argued with yuh. I don't care nothin' a-tall about bein' held up thisaway. Yo're damightyful ready with yore guns now," he added pointedly.

"We didn't dare open the doors when we were held up," defended the taller of the two clerks. "We barricaded 'em, and we couldn't shoot through 'em, could we?"

"Shore not, yuh might 'a' got shot doin' it," grinned Johnny. "Now, if you two fellers don't mind I'm a-goin' to scout 'round a few."

"'Round the cars?" asked Harmer.

"Yep, and I wish yuh'd sort o' trail along an' see what I do. Might need a witness some time."

Harmer nodded and they dismounted and walked toward the two cars. As they went Johnny scanned closely the ditches on either hand. The two mail-clerks watched them, their expressions a grotesque blend of doubt and curiosity. Neither Johnny nor Harmer paid them the slightest attention.

When the two reached the mail-car they stepped down into the left-hand ditch. In this ditch, about twenty feet from the end of the express-car, Johnny found three spent shells. Near the gaping, splintered side-doorway of the express-car he picked up five more. Scattered here and there along the ditch, or caught in the side of the cut, he found many others. In all, when he and Harmer returned to the end of the mail-car and the two clerks, there were twenty-eight shells in Johnny's pockets.

"Where's the wounded guard?" asked Johnny.

"Took him west on the engine. He needed a hospital."

Johnny nodded and went back to his horse. Harmer followed slowly. He was trying to build himself a cigaret, and that cut was filled with breeze.

Forty feet in advance, Johnny, his eyes on the ground, saw the corner of a small package protruding beneath a broken fish-plate. Johnny halted and knelt on one knee. To the watching mail-clerks it looked as if Johnny were fastening a loosened spur-strap. When Johnny stood up and walked on the small package was in the inner pocket of his vest. When the rancher joined him Johnny was sorting into two neat piles the spent shells he had collected. One pile, the larger, he put into a pocket of his chaps.

"Yuh like to play solitaire, don'tcha?" observed Harmer, his old eyes quizzical.

"When she's all yuh know yuh gotta like it," was Johnny's ambiguous reply.

"Here comes the posse," said Harmer, squinting east.

"An' they'll be full o' questions. Yore Mister Stevens——"

"Don't call him mine. I never lost the gent."

"Well, anyhow, it's the questions. Maybe they'll want to know did we find any shells. Maybe they'll want to look at them shells. Yuh seen how I divided 'em?"

"I got eyes."

"Then they's plenty shells in that saddle-pocket for them to worry about. No sense in lettin' on too much—now."

"I dunno what yo're drivin' at, Mister Ramsay," said the elderly Mr. Harmer, "but whatever it is, hop to it. Me, I'm a clam."

The posse arrived. The sheriff was much upset, even as Johnny had expected, for that he could find no spent shells. Johnny gladdened his heart by turning over the twenty-one shells in the saddle-pocket.

"All 45-90's," said Stevens, "an' that's a right common size. We'll label 'em 'Exhibit A' at the trial."

Several of the posse were observed to smile. It seemed that the sheriff's well-known passion for detail was not always appreciated by his fellows. Followed then much questioning of the mail-clerks, after which the trail of the robbers and their pack-animals was picked up and the chase begun.

The sheriff was of the opinion that the law-breakers were outlaws from the south and that they were heading for the breaks of the Lost Soldier Mountains. Jack Murgatroyd faintly subscribed to this view. He wasn't sure himself. Bill might be right. Guessed, after all, maybe he was. But Spill Harper and Skinny Devinney were positively blatant in their endorsement of the sheriff's judgment.

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A MILE or two on the way Johnny, having with meticulous forethought removed and concealed his spurs before the arrival of the posse, recalled having left them in the station at Diamond.

"Them spurs cost forty bucks," he remarked loudly, "an' I wouldn't lose 'em for a whole lot. Guess I'll sift back an' get 'em. See yuh later, Sheriff."

Johnny jerked his horse 'round and started for Diamond at a gallop. Halfway there he slowed to a walk and took from his pocket the small package he had picked up on the track. The square, heavy little parcel was wrapped in thick manila paper. In size and shape it resembled greatly one of the packages Mrs. Wallace had given the Piegan City express agent. Dirt and grease blotted out both the address and the name of the consignor. Johnny scratched lightly with a finger-nail but merely succeeded in more thoroughly griming the wrapper.

He stopped his horse and carefully unwrapped the package. Under the heavy outer covering was an inner wrapping of light duck doubled and tied with thick tape. He untied the tape and unrolled the duck. The sunlight shone dully on a heaping double handful of coarse gold-dust.

"They's no knowin' where you come from," he said with narrowed eyes. "Nor where yo're a-goin'," he added.

He rewrapped the dust, put it away in the inner pocket of his vest, and untwisted the reins from his saddle-horn.

"Get a-goin', hoss," said he. "Get a-goin'."

Arriving at the box-car station he was confronted by what appeared at first glance to be a generously whiskered gnome in knee-breeches. The apparition turned out to be a passenger's child who was amusing himself by wearing a false beard.

Johnny anchored his startled horse to the rusty link in the coupler at one end of the station and went inside. The operator was sound asleep. He was not pleased at being awakened.

"I know," said Johnny soothingly, "I shore hate to wake yuh up, an' yuh need sleep, but she's a case o' must. Is Mose Peters a reg'lar shore-'nough inhabitant o' these parts?"

"Is that what yuh woke me up for?" The operator's voice was peppery.

"Now, now, do-on't get excited."

The brown hand on the operator's shoulder had a most persuasive grip. The man behind the gray eyes was pleasant enough, but. . . .

"Well, what about Mose Peters?' 'the operator said more equably.

"Does he live around here?"

"No, he's a stranger."

"Know where he does live?"

"No. I said he was a stranger."

"Know him again if yuh saw him?"

"Sure. He was an old gent with bushy white whiskers."

"Like Harmer's—I mean the old fellah that rode with the posse."

"Nothin' like his. This jigger's beard was cut square across."

"Square across!" repeated Johnny and dashed out of the station.

He returned presently leading the gnome by the arm. The gnome was greatly affrighted and constantly squealed that he had done nothing.

"Where did yuh get them whiskers?" demanded Johnny.

"I didn't steal 'em, mister! Honest I didn't! I found 'em—found 'em lyin' under a bush out there! I didn't know they was yours."

Hastily the gnome snatched off his facial adornment and forced it upon Johnny. The latter gave the passenger's child a dollar.

"Don't be scared, sonny. Yo're all right, an' I wouldn't scare yuh for nothin'. Lemme try 'em on."

Holding the whiskers in place he turned to the agent.

"Might these belong to Mose?" he asked.

"They're a ringer for Mose's," replied the operator.

"I'll just take 'em with me," said Johnny, and stuffed the false beard into his hip-pocket. "See yuh later. Sonny, howdja like to earn another dollar, huh? Yuh would? All right. Show me now where yuh found yore ticklers."

The passenger's child led Johnny to a bush a hundred yards north of the right of way.

"Here's where I found it," said he. "It was lyin' right there."

He pointed to the ground. Certainly there were the marks of high cowboy heels in the vicinity of the bush. Johnny cast about in various directions and within an hour found where eleven horses had stood

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for some time—four or five hours he thought.

Johnny returned to the box-car. Again he was forced to arouse the operator. But this time the man was more approachable.

"I take it Mose Peters come here for his telegram," said Johnny.

"Naturally. We don't deliver from this station."

"Was Mose waitin' when the telegram came?"

"Waitin'! Why, say, stranger, that old feller's been spending all his mornings and evenings 'round here for the last two weeks. He sure wanted that telegram."

"I guess he must 'a'," said Johnny Ramsay. "What for a hoss did he ride?"

"Rode a mare, a black-tailed dun. Vicious brute. Kicked like a steer. He had to tie her with a rope."

"A *black-tail* dun! A black-tail *dun!*"

Here was luck. Johnny could have whooped for joy. Instead he wrote rapidly on a telegraph blank. Two minutes later the operator was clicking out Johnny's request to the cavalry major at Damson that he arrest Barry Camp at once as an accessory to the hold-up of No. 5.

"I dunno whether accessory means what I think it does, but I'm takin' a chance," he told the operator. "Yuh might tack on I'm a-comin' with evidence. Guess that oughta cinch it. Hafta take a chance on that Damson agent," he added to himself. "I dunno; I guess he's straight."

The operator had the telegram repeated and turned to Johnny with awe-struck eyes.

"Howdja find it out?" he asked.

"I was always good at conundrums," bragged Johnny. "Easiest thing I do. If they's an answer comes I'll be back later."

He went out and, to the amazement of several passengers and the Pullman conductor, did a neat double-shuffle in the dust.

"It's a wild life, old-timer," he remarked cheerfully to a fat passenger. "You hadn't ought to eat so much—not in this weather."

The fat passenger shrank back in alarm, and Johnny vaulted into his saddle without touching the stirrup. He jumped the pony into full gallop on the instant, leaving the fat passenger to make oration as to what he would have done had the cowboy persisted in his impertinence.

Johnny rode to the spot where the eleven horses had stood. From here he worked back over the way they had come. It was difficult, because in stretches there was a deal of short grass. He wished for Laguerre.

Early in the afternoon he came upon his goal, the camp of the five men. It was set far back at the very end of a blind cañon having an abundance of wood, grass and water.

"Nothin' mean about them," said Johnny. "All the pleasures o' home. An' it's shore a heap out o' the way. Wiser 'n owls, ain't they? I guess yes."

He laughed silently, turned his horse on a nickel and headed for Diamond.

"Quite a trail," he said aloud. "Camp to Spill, Spill to Skinny, an' Skinny to Mose Peters an' his black-tail dun—an' Harry Slay, if I can prove it on him."

Here Johnny swore quite heartily for that the corraling would doubtless involve the gambler's sister. He did not wish any harm to come to Mrs. Wallace. He did not love her in the least, but she was a woman and remarkably pretty and deserved better things of life than arrest and imprisonment.

"She's in it, —— the luck! She's bound to be." Johnny pettishly whacked his saddle-horn with the butt of his quirt and called Slay every evil name he could think of for dragging his sister into the mess. "She'd never 'a' done nothin', only for him," he gloomily told his horse. "An' o' course, bein' a woman, she has to stick by darlin' brother. Maybe after she's had a night to think it over," he added, brightening slightly, "she'll do what I told her."

THERE was no long line of passenger-cars at Diamond when Johnny rode in. The wrecking train had come and gone. Far in the east sounded the shrill whistle of a westbound freight. He dismounted and stripped the saddle and bridle from his horse and turned him loose.

"Kind o' look after this truck," he said to the operator, dropping the saddlery in a corner. "I've hobbled the horse. Guess he won't stray far. 'F he muddies up yore spring jerk rocks at him. When the posse sifts in tell the sheriff I had to go home."

He didn't tell the operator that he expected to return soon. No sense in telling these railroad employees too much. With a fairly light heart he boarded the caboose of the westbound freight.

He swung off the steps at Damson in the twilight. Laguerre met him.

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"W'ere you been?" demanded the half-breed. "I t'ink you was los' mabbeso. W'y you go 'way?"

"Tell yuh later, Telescope. Did the major arrest Camp all right?"

"Arrest heem? Naw, she deed not. Camp was ride 'way north wit' Bale un Tom dees aftairnoon. W'y she arrest heem? W'at you fin' out? W'at about de hold-up at Diamon'?"

"Plenty. Just now I wanna see that agent."

Johnny descended upon the station agent and asked questions. Yes, the telegram for the major had been received correctly, and one of the soldiers had taken it over to the camp. Johnny, not yet wholly reassured as to the agent's honesty, fled to the saloon for his saddle and bridle.

"—— fool boy," muttered Laguerre, staring after him. "All tam —— uva hurry. Wondair w'at she know about dat hold-up. She know all right."

He slowly went across to the corral where Johnny was now cinching up.

"See yuh later," was all Johnny would say, and he dashed off.

Three minutes later the major, watching his men break camp, was shocked by the tumultuous arrival of a horseman. He did not like this wild-riding person. It was the man who had made game of him, the stray man Ramsay. The officer's eyes glittered coldly.

"What do you mean by riding into a camp in this fashion?" he barked in his parade voice. "What do you mean by it? Here, Corporal——"

"Throw me out if yuh want," said Johnny, "but first tell me if yuh got my telegram? Yuh did, huh. Then why didn't yuh arrest Barry Camp? What did yuh let him get away for?"

"I'm not taking orders from a civilian," snapped the major.

"Oh, yo're not. Well, lemme tell yuh one o' the mainsprings o' this hold-up bunch has sloped because yuh wouldn't take orders from a civilian. I got the evidence, an' it leads straight back to this man Camp."

"What do you mean?"

"What I say."

The major hesitated, then he motioned Johnny to dismount.

"Come into my tent," he said, and Johnny followed.

"Tell me," began the major, but Johnny was already doing it.

He told the major of the telegrams and Mose Peters and his false whiskers, but he said nothing of the dun horse.

"Look at them two telegrams," Johnny almost wailed. " 'Five' an' 'today' in both of 'em. What else does it mean but the 'paymaster's comin' on No. 5 today.' It's as plain as a sergeant's stripes."

"But I don't see——"

"I'll begin at the beginning so's yuh'll see how I've worked it out. This Camp man knowed there was goin' to be a big pay-day at Fort Yardley, but he dunno when. All right, he goes an' warns the colonel the road-agents are plannin' to bushwhack the paymaster on the trail. The colonel called out a whole troop for a escort an' sent 'em to the railroad. Instead o' takin' along the ambulance like yuh always do for the paymaster, yuh hire a buckboard in the Bend, so's people won't guess nothin'. It works fine and dandy—not. It just shows the paymaster is comin' right soon.

"By hangin' 'round an' pickin' up a word here an' there—I dunno how much, but you be shore he got it out o' you an' yore two lieutenants some way—the red-head found out what train an' day the paymaster was due on. The rest is easy. All he has to do is send a fake telegram, an' who'd be the wiser? I'm tellin' yuh, Major, if I hadn't just happened to be in Piegan City, an' seen certain things to make me suspicious an' ask questions, no one would be the wiser. An' you let him go. You had him roped an' you let him go! Honest, Major, if she wasn't so —— serious I'd laugh. I shore would."

The moon-faced major, who should have known enough to keep his troubles to himself, lifted up his voice and cursed. He saw the whole affair with an appalling clarity of vision, and it hurt him to the depths of his being. He was like unto the dog upon whose tail the heavy foot has trod. He wished to talk of his anguish, and he did.

He called in his lieutenants and talked to them. Needless to say he blamed them severely for their loose tongues. The first lieutenant was not one to take a lacing lying down, and he talked back. It was a painful scene. Johnny departed when the major began to threaten the first lieutenant with arrest.

TO BE CONCLUDED

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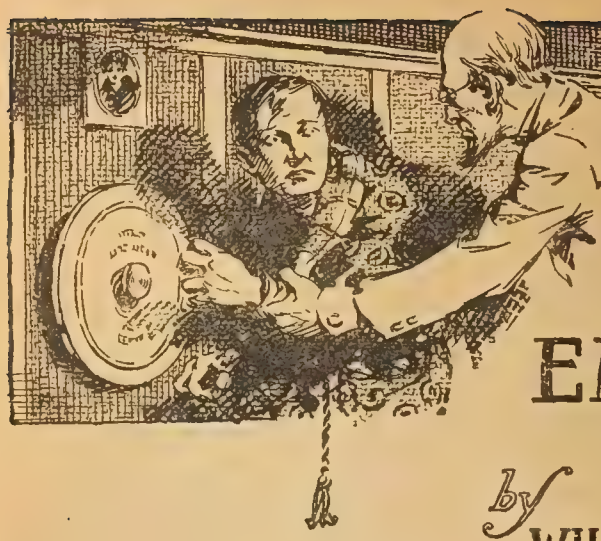

The CELLINI EMERALD AFFAIR

by WILLIAM A. SHRYER

Author of "Old Colonel Ptolemy," and "The Golden Ushabti Affair."

JOSIAH SIMMS closed the heavy volume of "Maspero's History of Egypt," carefully preserving his place with an old-fashioned silk book-marker. Removing his large steel-rimmed spectacles he polished them vigorously on the skirt of his long alpaca coat before snapping them into place within their well-worn pocket-case. With a grunt of annoyance he searched among the books and papers littering his library table for an elusive stogie stub, the failure to locate which seemed to afford him a secret pleasure, for he was limiting himself to five stogies a day, and this necessity of starting a fresh one allowed a more substantial good-night smoke than he had grudgingly anticipated.

As the little old man was about to light one of the villainous-looking weeds he was interrupted by a sudden ringing of his telephone, to reach which the wiry old gentleman scurried across the comfortably furnished library to the hall without, clicking the heels of his loose large slippers briskly as he hastened to answer the unexpected call.

"Well? Well?" he snapped impatiently into the receiver. "Who wants Josiah Simms at this ungodly hour? It's past 9:30 and time I was in bed."

"This is Judge Durham's. Norah," he was answered tremulously. "Some one has gone and killed the judge, Mr. Simms, and neither Master Frank nor Jennie is anywheres about. I just got home and my friend and me found him on the library couch. I didn't know what to do, so called you right up, sir."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Mr. Simms, shocked beyond measure. "Call up Dr. Martin right away. Then go right over to Mr. Brooks' for help. He lives two doors toward Woodward. Dr. Martin's number is Hemlock 893. Who's with you?"

"My friend, Mr. Doyle, sir. He's a policeman, Mr. Simms, and just brought me home. He called up the police station, but I thought I'd feel easier in my mind if I telephoned you."

"—— ——!" exclaimed the excited old gentleman. "Tell that fool to attend to his own business. Now go and do exactly as I've told you. I'll be right over in a jiffy."

The nervous old gentleman yelled shrilly to his maid, Ellen, who came running down the stairs in response to her master's orders with a pair of old-fashioned elastic-sided Congress gaiters, which the little man exchanged for his house-slippers in great haste. Grabbing his antique derby from the large-mirrored hat-rack, the perturbed Mr. Simms slammed the door behind him and hastened with long coat-tails flying in the direction of his friend's house on

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Collingwood Avenue, three blocks away.

As he ran the little old man kept repeating to himself that nothing really serious possibly could have happened to his old friend. At sixty the still agile and active Mr. Simms had retired from a profitable criminal-law practise. A similar step he had often urged on the judge, who at fifty-nine still preferred his seat on the probate bench, despite the claims of his old friend that the exacting demands of his professional life effectually prevented the proper enjoyment of "the remainder of his youth."

No later than that morning Mr. Simms and his friend had discussed the matter when the judge laughingly asserted his intention of dying in harness, a result he predicted as not likely to occur for at least ten good years. Regarding the judge's predictions for longevity Mr. Simms had subscribed with all his heart, and now this jesting discussion returned to the retired attorney as a prophecy no accident had the right to nullify.

Confident that the intelligence he had received over the telephone was bound to disclose itself as a mere figment of feminine hysteria, the breathless Mr. Simms was markedly nonplussed at the serious group he discovered on entering the house of his old friend. The first to greet him, with a gravity that was foreboding to say the least, was the mutual friend of the two old men, the managing editor of the *Daily Herald*. The neighborly Mr. Brooks had responded to the demoralized call of the maid at once, preceding by several moments the arrival of the lieutenant from the police station with a plain-clothes man.

The grave importance of these two officers was likewise reflected by the embarrassed attitude of the maid's police swain, to escape which the editor grasped the shaking hand of Mr. Simms in a sympathetic grip and led him through the entrance hall into the deserted dining-room beyond.

"That fool beau of Norah's has managed to complicate what I greatly fear is a mighty bad business," Mr Brooks addressed the shaken Mr. Simms. "By calling in the police we are confronted by an element of official meddling I know you will agree is bound to prove embarrassing. I arrived before them, Dr. Martin almost immediately following me. We found the judge lying on the couch in the library, unconscious and apparently in an alarming state of syncope. He had been shot in the breast, and the revolver, with one empty cartridge, was lying on the library table. It certainly looks like a case of suicide."

"Don't be an ass, Brooks," snapped the loyal Mr. Simms, in spite of the grief this alarming news caused him. "That's just about as likely as my becoming a Holy Roller. He'd have had to become plumb crazy first. Saw him this morning and he was as normal and chipper as you are right now, and a —— sight more cheerful. Where is he? I want to see the judge, and know he will want to see me."

"I'm afraid we shall have to wait a while, Mr. Simms," replied the editor with marked compassion for the concern of the little old man. "We carried him to his bedroom and Dr. Martin is doing everything he can, with Norah's assistance. He declines to allow any of us up-stairs until he gives his consent. He has sent for a trained nurse, who I think I hear coming in now."

The diplomatic Mr. Brooks excused himself for a moment, and directed to the floor above the businesslike young woman who had presented herself, after which he rejoined the dejected Mr. Simms.

"Tell me just what you found," begged the latter of the returning Mr. Brooks.

"I found Norah and her policeman awaiting me in the hall, and as soon as I entered the library I knew that something serious had occurred to the judge. He was lying on his back on the big couch, with a pillow under his head, and his hands folded over the pit of his stomach. Not a thing in the room appeared to be in any way disarranged, and on the table reposed the revolver as I have already described it."

"How far away from the couch was the table?" queried the keen little old man, with a sign of returning animation.

"Oh, seven or eight feet, I should guess."

"Um. And you're fool enough to think the judge could have shot himself by the table and had strength enough to walk over to the couch and carefully repose himself there, do you? You may be a good newspaper man, but I've got my opinion of your powers of deduction," scolded the now alert Mr. Simms. "And what about that pillow?"

"Well, you see, Mr. Simms," apologized the somewhat surprised editor, "I took it for granted that either the maid or the

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policeman had attempted to make him comfortable."

"If you took such important things for granted in your own business I've a pretty good idea of what would happen to your paper," snapped the disgusted little old man. "Since you didn't take the trouble to inquire, suppose you ask that big dub to come in here. The less we talk before that brace of flatfeet the better."

THE abashed Mr. Brooks called to the policeman, who entered twisting his helmet in his hands.

"Tell me just what you and Norah found, and how you happened to be browsing around in the front of this house," jerked out Simms.

"Well, sir," stammered the embarrassed patrolman, "I met Miss Norah at the corner of Woodward as she got off the car, and seeing as she was alone, and the night so dark, I just offered to walk home with her. It was her afternoon off, sir, and the other girl was out too, she said. The second-floor girl was to leave a cold supper for the judge, and Norah expected to get in the back way as usual, as it's never locked when anybody is home. We tried the door, though, and it was locked, so we came around to the front door and found it partly open. Miss Norah, sir, thought this rather strange, and asked me to step within, for fear something might be wrong."

"What time was that?" interrupted Mr. Simms.

"Nine-twenty, sir," respectfully replied the patrolman. "I stepped in with her and she turned on the lights in the hall, after which she stepped into the library and turned them on there. It was then that we saw the judge lying on the couch, pale like a dead man and with blood on his pajamas."

"How was he dressed?" snapped the retired attorney.

"He had on a wool dressing-gown over a suit of light pajamas, sir, and wore a pair of shoes, and nothing else. The gown was loose, which showed the blood on the pajama coat."

"Hum, he did, did he?" muttered the engrossed Simms. "I suppose you folded his hands and put the pillow under his head?"

"No, sir," emphatically denied the man. "Neither one of us put a hand to him. I knew better than that. I was pretty sure he was dead, as we couldn't see a sign of his breathing, so I just called up the station and reported it."

"All right," snorted his disgusted interrogator. "That'll be all, but if you want my advice, you won't be very keen to spread this story around. I have a little political influence myself, and the judge has a lot more. If he lives it isn't very likely he'll appreciate much gossip from you."

"Yes, sir," replied the man, squirming. "I know all about the judge, Mr. Simms. If you say so my trap is closed tight from this minute."

"Well, I do say so, and the quicker you clear out the better."

With this hint the patrolman departed hastily, and the two men walked into the library. Neither of the officers there seemed exactly at ease, there being little or no opportunity for the pursuit of their talents in the well-ordered room.

"Howdy, Mr. Simms," the lieutenant greeted the old man. "Looks like a dead open and shut case, don't it, sir. The old judge must have got tired of looking after that ex-wife of his and their rapscallion son and just ended it all."

"Look here, Reed," commanded the irate Mr. Simms at this unguarded speech of the officer. "The quicker you remember who Judge Durham is the better it's likely to be for you. I don't care a tinker's dam for your professional opinion, but if you know what's good for you this is about the last expression of it you'll see fit to make, here or elsewhere. I may be almost an old man, but I'm not such an eternal fool as you are.

"Some one shot the judge, of course, but whether he was shot or not, there's just one thing for you to do, and do quickly, and that's beat it. And let me give you just a bit of additional advice. If I hear of your mentioning this case to a soul until I give you permission to do so, I'll break you, so help me God."

"Good Lord, Mr. Simms," apologized the astounded lieutenant. "I didn't mean no harm. Forget it, forget it! If you say so we'll keep as mum as the grave. If you're going to take on this case it will be all right anyhow. Come on Alf, there ain't nothing further for us to do here."

The alacrity of the police officer was quickly seconded by his subordinate, both of whom knew all too well the keen ability

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of Mr. Simms, and respected any threat of his with a feeling engendered by too many engagements in the past to warrant any quibbling when the infuriated little attorney saw fit to crack the whip. For as well as being an authority on criminal methods that had often puzzled the department, the little old man and his friend the judge wielded a political power no mere underling would have the temerity to antagonize, so long as he possessed a glimmer of intelligence.

As the two officers departed obsequiously the little old man turned to the editor.

"That will end their nosing around for a while. It isn't likely that dub Reed will let a peep out of him, and whatever is at the bottom of this business, it's got to be kept quiet. I can't do less for the poor old judge, whatever the outcome."

As the old gentleman ceased speaking the maid Norah descended the stairs, and her immediate presence was commanded by Mr. Simms.

"How is the judge?" was the first question of the concerned little old man.

"He looks awful bad to me, Mr. Simms," the girl replied, weeping softly. "But the doctor says he thinks he may have a chance. The trained nurse and him are injecting something they called saline solution into his arm and we got him all wrapped up in hot blankets before the nurse come, sir. It's too awful, sir, and to think of the dear man having gone and done such a thing."

"Shut up," admonished Mr. Simms sternly, "and sit down here. When did you leave and where are the other servants and Mr. Frank?"

"I don't know, sir," sniveled the maid. "I left at two o'clock for my afternoon off, and Jennie was to leave as soon as the judge came home. The chauffeur doesn't sleep here and I haven't seen him since early this morning. Master Frank is at it again, sir, and he may show up and he may not. He has been home all night only twice in the last week. It's been worrying the judge something fierce, too."

"Um," muttered the disturbed little old man. "Whose revolver is this, do you know, Norah?" he continued, turning to the library table.

"It's the judge's, sir," replied the maid. "He always kept it loaded in the table drawer."

"And what's this?" continued Mr. Simms, taking up a greasy leather bag that reposed beside the revolver on the table.

"I don't know," announced Norah gazing at the dirty object with curiosity. "I never noticed it before. It doesn't belong to the judge, that I do know."

"I should think not!" retorted Mr. Simms handling the object gingerly.

The bag was strongly made and fastened at the top with small leather thongs, somewhat larger than shoe-strings. It showed evidence of age and long usage, and bulged flatulently in the middle as though accustomed to bulky contents far from justified by its present burden. For on being untied its contents were discovered to be exceedingly meager, though to the alert little man, instantly engrossing.

"Strange," he muttered, examining four colored beads that rolled from its distended mouth. "Phœnician glassware. Genuine necklace beads, too, or I'm an amateur. And what have we here?" he continued with excitement.

As he spoke the eager little man gathered together a score of dark, small roughly round objects as large as good-sized peas, that had rolled from the bag as he tilted it over the table-top. He reached for a strong reading-glass from the judge's table and scrutinized the small beads with growing interest.

"I say, Brooks," he gasped. "Just take a look at these will you! They are probably the first specimen of man's handicraft in wrought iron the world knows anything about. There isn't a question on earth about it. They are genuine prehistoric iron beads of the obscure peoples who preceded that most wonderful nation we now call Egyptian. It has been only a few years since that it has been definitely determined that a great race of people inhabited the Nile Valley for thousands of years prior to its occupation by the race who developed into the Egyptian people.

"These beads are not a day younger than eight thousand four hundred years. Their discovery showed how long it took for so-called civilized nations to learn again this great art, and yet this obscure prehistoric race knew all about iron, and lived so long ago we can't even conceive of the vast lapse of time since they thrived and flourished."

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THE interested Mr. Brooks and the gaping Norah gazed with interest at the small unassuming specimens that so suddenly had been endowed with such romantic associations by the excited antiquarian.

"They aren't much for looks, are they?" suggested the editor.

"Superb, superb," exclaimed the excited Mr. Simms with enthusiasm. "But there should be some gold beads, too. They always wore them on a string together. Here, let's see."

With a jerk the impatient Mr. Simms turned the leather bag inside out, disclosing a piece of dirty string that had been broken instead of untied. The string showed clearly two gradations of color, a soiled space, and a clean one, the latter corresponding to the length of iron beads when strung in a row, by hardly two inches.

"You see!" exclaimed the old man. "Some vandal has broken the string and stripped off the gold beads, which probably alternated with the iron. They all must have fitted tightly, as the clean space clearly indicates the original length of the entire string of beads."

Turning again to the bag Mr. Simms carefully examined its soiled interior with the assistance of the strong reading-glass.

"Ah," he ejaculated. "Something the miscreant overlooked. Here's a small emerald caught in the edges of the leather at the bottom seam. It's an antique, too, as the cutting hasn't been employed by lapidaries for several hundred years. Now what are we to deduce from that?"

"Looks like the judge must have had antiquarian treasures you never knew about, Mr. Simms," suggested the editor. "He may have been shot while trying to guard them from some burglar."

"Nonsense," almost snorted Simms. "The judge didn't know as much about antiquarian matters as a mountain goat. Besides if he had ever owned such a thing as a set of prehistoric iron beads he would have told me. What's more he didn't know what they were at that, or he would have called me up the moment they came into his possession, whatever the occasion of his securing them. I think, however, we may go on the assumption that some one robbed him of the contents of this bag, however strange it seems for the judge to have been in possession of such a thing as this, not to speak of its peculiar contents. At any rate it's something to go on."

As the little man was devoting a second scrutiny to the antique relics so engrossing to him, a banging at the back door called the gaping Norah from the room. She returned almost at once, followed by a much younger woman whom she introduced as the missing Jennie.

"Well, miss," demanded Mr. Simms. "You're rather late getting in. Kindly tell us where you have been and whether you know anything that will shed any light on the unfortunate affair we are here to investigate."

"I'm not late, sir," spunkily retorted the injured maid. "It isn't half-past ten yet. Besides I don't know a thing. Norah says the master has been shot, and if he has I'm sure I don't know a thing about it."

"When did you leave and who was here when you left?"

"I left about a quarter-past six," snapped the girl. "The judge came home early, and took a nap. He came down in his dressing-gown and I gave him a cold supper at half-past five. Some lady called just before six and I left while she was here."

"Um," grunted the little old man. "And what did this caller look like and what name did she give?"

"She didn't give no name. As for her looks, I can't say I thought much of 'em, for all she was dressed fit to kill and trunk empty. She was fat as a boarding-house-keeper, and was laced into a long straight-front corset that didn't half hide her stomach, you can take it from me. She had rouge on you could see a mile away, and her hair had been monkeyed with besides. Tried to look like thirty and was fifty if she was a day."

"'Snough, 'snough," protested the agitated Mr. Simms. "I can guess who that was. How did the judge receive her?"

"In his dressing-gown," sniffed the scandalized maid. "And he didn't seem too pleased to see her either. They were going it hammer and tongs when I left."

"All right, you and Norah may go to bed. I'm going to stay all night, and if anything's wanted I'll call you."

"Suit yourself," returned the snippy maid, flirting out of the room, and followed by Norah with a polite good-night.

"This is worse and more of it," sighed Mr. Simms. "That caller was no other than the

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judge's divorced wife, though what she might want is a mystery. She hasn't the brains of a fly, and I'll find out what she was after the first thing in the morning."

As Mr. Simms announced this determination the doctor came down-stairs softly, and was buttonholed by Mr. Simms.

"There, there," he admonished, in answer to an excited question from Mr. Simms. "Don't excite yourself. The judge is far from being all right, but I think he'll pull through. He must have been shot less than an hour, but was very weak from internal bleeding. He was shot through the right lung, and it is no wonder the girl and her beau thought he was dead. He certainly exhibited a regular death pallor, due to the hemorrhage.

"I have done everything I can. We gave him an intravenous injection of eight hundred c.c.'s of normal saline solution and also some morphine, and have kept him packed in warm blankets and surrounded by hot-water bottles. If he is not much better in the morning we shall take him to the hospital and try a transfusion of blood."

"Do you think he will surely recover, Doctor?" almost pleaded Mr. Simms.

"Unless something unforeseen happens. He must be kept absolutely quiet for several days however, and nothing to excite him must be allowed. That nurse is perfectly competent, and I'm going home to bed."

"All right, Doctor," agreed Mr. Simms. "I'll stay here all night."

"Good," responded the physician heartily. "Come on Mr. Brooks, I'm going your way."

THE two departed, after which Mr. Simms retired to one of the second floor bedrooms and went to bed with most of his clothes on. Awakening early he dressed and descended to the first floor at six o'clock and as he entered the library surprised a flushed, and disheveled youth at the library table, who hastily thrust into his trousers pocket a huge roll of bills he apparently had been counting.

He arose with surprise at the unexpected interruption and gazed at Mr. Simms with ill-concealed embarrassment.

"What—what are you doing here?" he stammered.

"Sit down," sternly commanded Mr. Simms. "Where have you been that you sneak into the house at this time of day with a bundle of money you seem so eager to conceal?"

"What business is it of yours, I'd like to know?" demanded the youth unsteadily. "I'm not taking orders from any old fossil like you."

"Um," sneered Mr. Simms. "Maybe not, but just attend to this, if you please. Your father was nearly murdered last night and apparently robbed. I hate to think it of any offspring of my dear old friend, but the reports I hear of you don't make me as unsuspicious as I should like to be. Just give an account of yourself."

The now trembling youth gazed with terror-stricken pallor at the old man and with a gasp replied:

"I don't know a thing about it. I haven't been near the house since eleven o'clock yesterday morning. Besides I'm going to bed."

With a drunken lurch he steered for the door, and to the accompaniment of a baleful regard from the silent Mr. Simms steadied himself against the banisters and mounted the stairs uncertainly.

"I'll just wait till you're sober, young man," muttered the disgusted attorney. "I can't believe anything of the kind of the judge's boy, but he has certainly been up to something, and I mean to find out what."

With this reflection he routed out the maid Jennie from the butler's pantry and demanded a breakfast at once. The latter superciliously conveyed this order to Norah who ministered to the little old man's wants without delay. As he was finishing his hearty meal the nurse came down and joined him, announcing that her patient seemed much stronger, and from what she could tell would not require to be moved to the hospital for the heroic treatment suggested by the physician as a possible course the night before.

Cheered by this news, Mr. Simms walked to Woodward Avenue and secured a paper, discovering no announcement of the affair, much to his relief. For almost two hours he read in the judge's library, and soon after the doctor called, announced that he intended running down-town.

Walking briskly to Woodward Avenue Mr. Simms boarded a street-car which deposited him some forty minutes later at a corner but a few blocks from the center of the shopping district, infested by a score or more of residence hotels, the majority of

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which enjoyed reputations of more or less dubious character. Selecting the one he had chosen as his objective point he entered its somewhat garish portals and requested that his name be announced to Mrs. Fredonia Durham, who, in spite of the scandalously early hour, immediately directed that her unexpected visitor be shown to her suite.

The quarters of Mrs. Durham were composed of a sitting-room and bedroom, and she emerged from the latter into the former as the little old man knocked at the door and admitted himself at her invitation to enter. He found the lady in a soiled kimono, which but illy concealed the copious nature of her figure, untrammeled as it was by the rigorous confinement of her customary outdoors equipment. Apologizing profusely for this apparent dishabille the hostess smirked at Mr. Simms and requested the purpose of his early call, on learning which the lady all but swooned upon a divan hardly calculated to resist such unexpected strains as that to which it was thus suddenly subjected.

"My dear Josiah," sighed the astounded lady. "This is a most alarming intelligence. And to think I called on the dear misguided man only yesterday afternoon."

"Um," grunted the unimpressed Mr. Simms. "Exactly. It is because of your recent call, the last of which we have any advice before the regrettable accident occurred, that I am here. Will you be so good as to tell me the object of your call upon the judge, and the approximate length of that interview?"

"Why, I think we talked for about an hour, Mr. Simms. I know it was about half-past-seven o'clock before I returned to the hotel for a rather late dinner. As you know, the judge is peculiarly obdurate, and I felt called upon to protest in person his most unwise lack of control over our dear Frankie. It has been called to my attention that the dear boy has been indulging in strong liquor considerably, and has even gone so far as to become involved with associates no gentleman should cultivate. The judge was not very responsive to my suggestions, even going so far as to unjustly accuse me of being a party of Frankie's debauches by occasionally advancing him trifling sums."

"Um," grunted Mr. Simms. "I dare say you have. But was there the slightest cause for any serious quarrel between you?"

"Oh, Mr. Simms, of course not. You know the judge is quite touchy about Frankie, and when I saw that my well-meant suggestions were becoming really annoying to him, I excused myself with all possible haste. It is a great pity."

"Exactly. And what did you do the rest of the evening?"

"Why some friends of mine wanted me to join in a little friendly game of 'red-dog', and I think we must have played quite beyond midnight. But what could that possibly have to do with the accident to the judge?"

"Nothing, I guess," assented Mr. Simms. "I wanted to say, however, that one of my objects in calling was to impress on you the necessity of silence in regard to this matter."

"Oh, of course, Mr. Simms. You may rely on my absolute discretion I'm sure."

"Humph," muttered Mr. Simms to himself on leaving the littered apartment.

"I guess it's the last thing any one would be able to count on. As I suspected, however, she couldn't have the slightest guilty knowledge, so I'll just forget her in connection with this mysterious business."

Assured that his visit had been as entirely fruitless as he had suspected it might be, the little old man hastened back to Collingwood Avenue. The maid Jennie was cleaning the front vestibule and he walked into the hall without having to ring the bell. Finding the door to the library closed he opened it and stepping into the library quietly, surprised the judge's son, dressed in slippers and dressing-gown, hastily closing the small wall-safe at the opposite side of the room.

"What does this mean?" stormed Mr. Simms, running nimbly across the room and grasping the hand of the still intoxicated youth. Throwing open the small round door Mr. Simms was astonished to see a wad of paper money, which he extracted and waved under the nose of the scantily attired youth.

"Trying to rob your poor father, as well as committing every other crime against decency on the calendar, I suppose? What have you to say for yourself?"

"Not a thing to you," expostulated the groggy young man. "Only this, you meddling fool—I was putting that money in there and not taking it out. Now maybe you'll let me go to bed and sleep in peace."

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With a drunken semblance of dignity the youth left the room and for the second time that morning left the suspicious Mr. Simms to his own thoughts. Considering that the condition of the young man was even worse than it had been earlier in the day the perplexed attorney contented himself with counting the money he had taken from the small safe, discovering that the amount was exactly five hundred dollars.

"I wonder!" mused the perplexed old man to himself, as he fingered the large roll of bills. "Rather suspicious, to say the least. I shouldn't be surprised if the chauffeur might be able to throw some light on this young man's activities. I'll find out."

Calling the maid Norah, he first reassured himself regarding the condition of the judge, after which he asked to have the chauffeur sent in to him.

"But he ain't shown up this morning, Mr. Simms," reported Norah.

"What's that, what's that?" querulously exclaimed Mr. Simms. "And nobody has seen him since yesterday morning? Where does he live, does anybody know?"

"Oh, yes, sir, Mr. Simms. He lives just across Hamilton Avenue on Lawrence. It's the third or fourth door. His name is Bellini, and he lives with a family by the name of Forsythe. I know you can't miss it."

AS THE direction given meant a short walk of less than four blocks, Mr. Simms departed in haste to secure an interview with the missing chauffeur, finding the house without difficulty. He was advised by the landlady there that her lodger had left the day before at noon, taking his little daughter with him. He had told her he was leaving for Canada, and intended taking his child to stay with his sister who lived somewhere on the East Side.

The woman did not know the number of the street, but advised Mr. Simms that her daughter knew it, and would be glad to give it to him on her return that afternoon. She was a school-teacher and would be home by four or a little later. Taking the telephone number Mr. Simms promised to call up at the designated hour, departing with a feeling that things were becoming somewhat complicated.

As several hours were to be consumed before the hour of four arrived, Mr. Simms returned to Collingwood Avenue and called up Lieutenant Reed. The latter received this advance with becoming humility and promised to follow the directions suggested with fidelity, and report the result of his task by six o'clock. Mr. Simms then decided to return to his own house where he felt his regular afternoon siesta might be taken in greater comfort. Before leaving he gave the maid Norah explicit instruction to order the sleeping young man to remain at home until he might be interviewed at dinner, at which repast Mr. Simms promised to officiate at the judge's home.

Forgetting his promise to call up for the chauffeur's number the little old man retired in his own bedroom shortly after and did not wake until almost 5:30. He then called up the boarding-house and learned that the missing Bellini's sister lived at 308 Congress. It was then too late to make any investigation in that quarter, and returning to the judge's house he found Frank Durham, sober and abashed, awaiting him in the judge's library.

"I'm mightily ashamed of myself, Mr. Simms," he spoke up manfully. "I must have been exceedingly discourteous to you earlier in the day. I had been out all night, and I must admit had been drinking a great deal too much. I have a hazy recollection that we had a little argument over some money, and since I have learned the serious condition of poor old dad I don't know how to tell you the depth of my shame."

"That's all right, Frank," retorted the pleased little old man. "I felt pretty sure you couldn't be mixed up in such a bad business as this, but there are one or two things that need explaining."

"I know, sir, and it is exactly that which causes me the most embarrassment. I feel pretty certain I must have given you a very bad opinion of myself and I've got to clear up one thing, much as it hurts my pride to do it. I had been drinking for several days and yesterday morning father refused to give me any more money. I went to mother, and she had none to let me have, either. She said she would try to have some for me today, but I was in a condition that seemed to demand what I wanted right away or not at all. I therefore returned here about noon, opened dad's little safe and took five hundred dollars.

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I was putting it back when you met me here the second time this morning."

"But you must have had a good deal more from the looks of the roll I saw you counting early before breakfast," interrupted the old man.

"Yes, sir, I did. I happened to be lucky last night and won almost fifteen hundred dollars at poker. I was counting it when you came in and intended then replacing father's five hundred."

"Well, Frank, it's bad enough, God knows, but I am certainly glad to learn the exact state of affairs. I was considerably worried and there's no denying it."

"I know," commented the thoroughly sobered youth. "But let's eat dinner. I have had a good lesson, which I hope may have a lasting effect. I have decided to enlist in the marines, just as soon as dad gets well enough to have me leave him. I've got to stay till then, anyhow."

"Good, my boy, I hope they make a man of you. But there's the telephone. I am expecting a message from Lieutenant Reed, and think possibly that is he."

As Mr. Simms suspected, the call was from Lieutenant Reed. The latter reported that at Mr. Simms' request he had directed inquiries to be made of every regular pawnshop in town. At not a single one of them, however, had any person attempted to pawn a piece of jewelry with a missing emerald, nor at any of them had any pledges of an antique character been offered.

This intelligence, as well as a full report on his day's activities, was discussed after dinner in the library between Mr. Simms, the judge's son and their later caller, Mr. Brooks. Each of them had to admit that absolutely nothing had been accomplished of an enlightening character. The son was shown the leather pouch and its contents, but was as mystified as the others regarding its ownership, as well as its possession by the judge. He also advised that the absence of the chauffeur held no sinister aspect for him, as he felt assured the young man was upright and honest.

The arrival of the doctor interrupted the discussion of the three men, who begged the physician to visit his patient at once and report with all speed regarding his opinion of the present condition of the stricken judge. After a half-hour up-stairs the doctor rejoined the men below, reporting that the judge's condition showed a marked improvement, and that in his opinion there was no question of his being able to survive the shock and make a good recovery in two or three weeks' time.

The sufferer was reported as conscious, but very weak. Dr. Martin forbade any possible conversation regarding the supposed attack that had been made upon his patient, promising to consider such an interview no sooner than day after the morrow.

Mr. Simms and the editor left with the doctor, Mr. Simms returning home for a good night's sleep to which he felt his labors of the day entitled him in spite of the nap he had managed to snatch during the afternoon.

THE first thing the next morning the little old man called up to ascertain the condition of the judge, and being assured by an excellent report, announced that he would call later in the day. In the meantime he betook himself to the number on Congress Street. Not knowing the name of Bellini's sister, he had some trouble in locating her among the teeming Italian families living at number three-hundred and eight, but at last located the lady and received a cordial welcome.

The chauffeur's sister advised Mr. Simms that her brother had left the day before yesterday at noon. Feeling an urge to assist his country in the struggle with the Central Powers he had enlisted with a Canadian regiment, owing to the difficulty in getting back to Italy to enlist there. He had been notified of the pending departure of his company for Toronto only the day before. His little daughter he had confided to his sister's care, and had advised the women that he had arranged with Judge Durham for the regular payment of a monthly sum for his daughter's maintenance.

These facts being elicited after considerable gesticulation, Mr. Simms was on the point of departing when he thought to show the leather pouch to the young woman, asking her if by any chance she had ever seen it before. Her excitement was immediate. She recognized the bag as one given to her brother by their father on the birth of Bellini's little daughter. The father had been a great traveler in his

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youth and had gathered together a number of curious and valuable jewels during his travels. Their sum total was supposed in the family to represent a very goodly sum, which he had stated was to be his granddaughter's gift from him.

The woman had no real idea of the value of the bag's contents and doubted if her brother had. She described several of the pieces, however, and in spite of the crudity of her word pictures of them Mr. Simms was convinced that the taste and knowledge of the grandfather might well be suspected as above the ordinary. He refrained from detailing the occasion responsible for his possession of the bag, however, promising to call later and see the woman after he was in a position to tell her more definitely the possible fate of the missing jewels.

That the bag of antiques had been confided to the judge by Bellini now seemed fairly obvious to the little old man, especially since the chauffeur had arranged with the judge to advance sums of money for the daughter. It was also evident that the judge knew of the proposed departure of the chauffeur, and owing to the acknowledged condition of young Frank during the previous ten days it was not remarkable that a knowledge of it had not been transmitted to him, or remembered if it had been.

While walking through the Italian district as he mused over these possibilities it suddenly occurred to Mr. Simms that one possible source of information regarding the missing jewels was the establishment of his old acquaintance, Benzoni. To the latter came all the Italians of the city when in need of money or advice, and to Mr. Simms' very certain knowledge more than a few of them often secured advances on pledges of very uncertain ownership.

Run as a "bank," old Benzoni, the proprietor, had never seen fit to acknowledge the pawnbroking as part of his many-sided activities, nor was he the possessor of any license to engage in that interesting business. On this account the investigation Mr. Simms had requested doubtless had failed to include Benzoni's, and acting on a conviction that a personal call would do no harm in any event, he walked across to the corner of Antoine and Gratiot and entered the place of "Little Italy's Banker."

To the old bald-headed proprietor Mr. Simms confided as much as seemed necessary. The two old men had often met in their respective professional capacities and maintained a mutual respect that needed no protestations. Each trusted the other, and in this case Mr. Simms' perspicacity was fittingly rewarded.

"No collection of antique jewels has been submitted to me, Mr. Simms," the latter was advised. "But a single jewel, with one stone missing, came into my hands last night. Moreover, it is an antique of exceeding value, as you may see, though the color of the missing stone is not deducible from the piece itself. Here it is."

He placed before the enraptured gaze of Mr. Simms a lavallière of most exquisite design. In an oval surrounded by pearls, was a filigree design representing Cupid and Psyche, and suspended from the oval a small pendant in the empty setting of which Mr. Simms discovered the loose emerald to fit with exactitude.

"Shades of Cellini!" exclaimed the enraptured Mr. Simms. "But that is a masterpiece."

"Is it not so?" returned Benzoni. "Moreover, I am convinced it is by no other than Benvenuto himself. It is so patently of such great value that I refused to other than lend a small sum on it that its owner might not be tempted to part with it because of the possible sacrifice a larger loan might have entailed eventually."

"That does you great credit, Benzoni," replied Mr. Simms. "I am afraid, however, that the man who pawned it will never be the one to claim it. I have small doubt that he stole it. Do you know who he is?"

"Of a certainty I know. I knew his father before him, and feel assured that his story of its having been his father's is quite true. The latter was known to me as a remarkable judge of such things. The son, I fear, is not so worthy. In fact, he is quite a scapegrace, and no credit to a family otherwise perfectly honorable. It was brought in by Carlo Bellini."

"Ah," ejaculated Mr. Simms "He is a chauffeur, is he not?"

"By no means," responded Benzoni. "He is nothing so respectable, I fear. He is something of a gambler, and I doubt not, even worse. He is also a hop fiend, and if I am not mistaken, is far from being

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exactly right. He gave that impression most decidedly when here yesterday."

"Um," commented Simms. "He might be the brother of the man I have reference to. And where do you think he may be found?"

"Well, as a rule you may find him hanging around Antonio's gambling joint on Mullett Street, though it is a little bit early in the day for that."

"I am greatly obliged to you," Mr. Simms politely thanked the old banker. "Preserve this carefully, and I think you will hear from me later about it."

Going to the telephone Mr. Simms called Lieutenant Reed and made an appointment to meet him at Antonio's place at three that afternoon, requesting that a plain-clothes man accompany the lieutenant. At the stipulated hour the three foregathered and were advised by the outside man that Bellini had just gone up-stairs.

The three accordingly mounted to the large bare room, which they found fairly well filled with a motley crowd of Italians and Greeks tempting the fickle goddess with small regard for the intrusion of an officer in full uniform. The latter paid no attention to the players, but singling out a small wizened Italian demanded that he be pointed to the person of Carlo Bellini.

The latter happened to be standing directly behind Antonio, the proprietor, and hearing a request for his identity being disclosed, bolted for the door with more speed than precision, being suddenly intercepted in his mad rush by the alert plain-clothes officer standing by the door. In the arms of the latter the entrapped Italian fought and kicked viciously, yelling at the top of his voice:

"They're mine, I tell you. They're mine! They're mine! I didn't top him. He did it himself! He did it himself!"

Completely unimpressed by either the yelling or the struggles of the crazy little prisoner the big detective dragged him down the stairs and to the corner, where the wagon was rung for amidst a gathering crowd of jeering foreigners. On the way to the jail the lieutenant "frisked" the prisoner, disclosing to view such a collection of antique jewels as he had never had the pleasure of suspecting to exist. To Mr. Simms the sight was doubly interesting, first because of the tangible value of the stones, and second because of their undoubted age and artistic value.

By the time the prisoner was deposited at the jail he had become absolutely silent, except for mutterings and imprecations occasionally addressed to heaven, to the accompaniment of wild beatings of his clenched fists on his thin flat chest.

"Bugs right," whispered the officer to Mr. Simms. "Better take him to the psychopathic, I'm thinking."

"Lock him up," directed Mr. Simms, "and don't talk to any reporters. I think the judge may be well enough to throw some light on this business, and we don't want to do anything he'd be sorry for."

"I get you, Mr. Simms," agreed Reed. "Let me know what you want done, and we'll do it."

Having seen the now quiescent prisoner taken within the jail Mr. Simms returned home, and took a nap, from which he arose much refreshed in plenty of time to walk over to the judge's for dinner with the son. Mr. Brooks was invited over that evening and to the two Mr. Simms detailed the day's developments. To Dr. Martin the same story was repeated later in the evening. The physician agreed that his patient showed sufficient signs of recovery to warrant a few questions being asked the next morning, if all went well, and with this the eager Mr. Simms had to be content.

AFTER an early breakfast next morning Mr. Simms went for a long walk, attempting by this activity to dispel the feeling of extreme impatience under which he labored. He was well aware that the physician would not make his regular morning call on the stricken judge until nine o'clock at the earliest, but considerably before that hour the little old man found his footsteps irresistibly drawn to the home of his friend on Collingwood Avenue.

He fussed nervously about the house for almost three-quarters of an hour before the arrival of Dr. Martin at last served to partially quiet his impatience. The doctor was promptly reminded by Mr. Simms of the purpose of his early arrival, and, to the concerned little old man, promised to give as favorable latitude to his request for an interview as his professional conscience would allow.

After a half-hour in the judge's bedroom

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he descended to the library and smiled reassuringly at Mr. Simms.

"I find the judge very much improved. He is quite bright and I assured him of your great concern to learn something of his assailant. He wants to see you, but what I suggest is for you to outline your surmises to the judge and request that he confirm or deny your conclusions by nods of his head as you go along. In this manner it will be possible to save him a long explanation, for which he is certainly not physically prepared. If this is agreeable to you we may now go up. Only remember, I shall not allow the judge to actually talk more than two minutes."

"All right, all right," agreed Mr. Simms impatiently. "Let us go up immediately."

As the two men entered the sick-room the judge smiled pathetically at his old friend, who hastened to his side and as he grasped the thin wasted hand of the stricken man, allowed two big tears to run down his trembling cheeks.

"My dear Judge," he rallied bravely. "They wouldn't let me see you before. You can't imagine the concern we have all felt for you."

The judge nodded his head comprehendingly.

"We have apprehended the man we think must have shot you, Judge," continued the sympathetic little old man, "and before we make any charges against him we want to learn your exact wishes in the matter. I am going to tell you just how much we have learned and you may nod your head as you agree with any statements I may make, or shake it should you disagree with any of my surmises or conclusions."

The judge nodded his head and smiled wanly, when Mr. Simms continued:

"We know that your chauffeur was called suddenly to join his regiment in Canada, and assume that he told you of his purpose and asked you to take charge of certain belongings of his daughter. Is that right?"

The judge nodded slowly.

"I discovered that your wife had called the evening you were shot and that you had some words together. I felt sure she had nothing to do with your accident."

The judge shook his head determinedly.

"The jewels entrusted to you were very valuable, Judge, and worth a good many thousand dollars. Did you know that?"

The judge shook his head with a most surprised look on his face.

"We found that a brother of Bellini, your chauffeur, pawned a jewel with a missing stone, and the latter was found by me in the leather bag on your library table. He was in possession of several other valuable antique pieces when we arrested him, and it is my conviction that he called here and stole the jewels from the bag, leaving behind the few pieces we found, which he doubtless did not consider to possess the slightest value."

The judge nodded his head.

"This brother of Bellini's has developed acute dementia since we arrested him. How badly he may be affected is not certain, as he is known to have been hitting the pipe with great regularity lately. Should he recover, should we charge him with your attempted murder?"

The judge shook his head angrily, and drawing Mr. Simms closer to him, whispered with labored breath:

"I was going to bed, when I remembered the bag of jewels and went down-stairs to put them in my little safe. This man rang the bell and asked for Bellini.

"He pushed by me and walked into the library. He saw the bag in my hand and grabbed for it. I remembered five hundred dollars was in my safe and snatched my revolver from the table. We struggled for it and during the scuffle it went off and the bullet got me in the breast. The ruffian picked me up and placed me carefully on the sofa. That's the last I remember. Partly my fault. Don't do anything to the man."

The judge seemed to be considerably relieved after giving these particulars, and closed his eyes more in relaxation than from exhaustion. The doctor grasped the arm of Mr. Simms and whispered that the allotted time was up. As the unwilling Mr. Simms gave a parting squeeze to the hand of the judge the latter again drew him closer, and with a pleasant smile, not unmixed with a certain quizzical humor, whispered:

"And Josiah, dying with your boots on isn't what it's cracked up to be. I'm going to resign as soon as I am out of this —— bed."

"Bully for you, Judge," returned the affected little old man. "Hurry up and get well. We'll enjoy the rest of our youth together."

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The WAY of the STRONG

by ROBERT J. PEARSALL

Author of "The Strength of Gregson," "Guilty", etc.

THE gray, belated daylight came at last. To the six clinging to the top of the *Condor's* deck-load of lumber, it revealed a prospect of very little hope indeed. Shoreward there was nothing but crackling white foam, with an evil line of breakers edging it half a mile away. Seaward an endless line of black waves charged down upon the schooner, frothing at their crests as they came, as though they'd gone mad. And mad indeed seemed the sleet-filled wind that tore at them; and frenzied with the lust to seize and drown seemed the hundred hungry hands that the sea raised up every moment to drag the sailors down.

Their perch was a desperate one, and maintained with constant struggling. Still it was plain that had they stayed anywhere on deck or 'tween decks after the *Condor* had let fall her anchors, they would have died long since, for the hull of the schooner was awash in a boiling tumult of water. Her masts were gone and her davits swung empty and some twisted brass-work and wooden wreckage showed where her cabin had been. Only the top of the heaped-up cargo of timber, made fast with cordage and spars, escaped the surge of the waves; and even that was mostly white with ice, covering it like a shroud.

Of the six, one was a boy; and surely it was a fearful sight for one so young to see, a fearful death for him to look on. It was no wonder it hurt the men that he should be there, though they possessed none too stout hearts themselves. They huddled around him, protecting him as best they could; and once Sandys, a middle-aged man with a white-shot beard and watery eyes, leaned over to his ear.

"Don't be afraid, Tom," he cried, in a shout that the gale turned into a whisper and flung away.

And the boy shouted back that he was not afraid. This was no doubt partly a lie born of his boyishness, but partly, too, it was true. For fear hinges upon thoughts of self, and at that moment the boy was not thinking of himself. He was thinking of the captain, the while he heard the other men curse that same captain under their breaths for having lost them their lives; and his heart was filled with helpless anger and love and longing.

The boy could see the captain by turning half-way around. He saw a great body encased in dripping black oilskins leaning straight-backed against the storm; he saw a face rugged and immovable as a gray cliff. The captain's eyes were a fierce and burning blue, filled with the blazing fury of will that had made him the ill-talk of half the ports of the lakes; and,

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heedless of all else, he kept them fixed upon the shore. And in them was such vigor and love of life as few men feel.

The boy saw this; and while his heart went out to the captain in his extremity, a shrinking came upon him as he thought to what ignoble end the captain's hard grip on life might lead. His mind went into the past, too, and he thought of how already men had maligned the captain. Or had they maligned him?

For sure, he was a headstrong man and a wild one; a man with a hard tongue and harder hand; a reckless roisterer in port and a devil to crowd canvas at sea; the first to face the ice-drifts in the Spring and last to Winter anchorage. And surely too, only such a man would have shipped this chancy and unexpected last cargo, for the season was over, his regular crew was discharged, and the storm had already been making before he left Manistee.

A man-killer, some had called him, and the boy wondered if he deserved the title. And a man-killer his men called him now, those roustabout men that had not known him two days before. But after a while he leaned forward and spoke to the boy, and under the depth of his voice there seemed a wistful, gentle note.

"I brought you to this, Tom? Ain't you blamin' me, too?"

In a flash, the boy reviewed the year that had passed since the captain had picked him up, a homeless waif of the wharves. A thoughtful lad he had been, somewhat too quiet, perhaps, and apt to shrink a little from the rough jests and teasings of the sailors, and from the captain's own rough ways. But still he had been happy on board the *Condor*, he who had known little happiness before or elsewhere.

Great voyages had he gone and wonderful ports had he seen; he had forgotten the feeling of bodily hunger and his heart had been filled with friendship. All this he owed to the captain, and he loved him. But if he had spoken all that was in him, he would have said this:

"If you killed me, I couldn't blame you, Captain; but I am mad with what those men are saying, and with what others will say after we are gone. And with myself, too, because I can't but see the reason for it; I can't but see you as you are. To me you've been as a father, kind as the lake in a Summer calm; but to others you've been sometimes hard and raging as these waters are today. And I wish I could know, and that all the world could know, which of the two is the true man of you, before we die."

But all he said was—

"No, no, Captain."

And then behind their backs a great wall rose high and made to overwhelm the schooner. All were flung backward as she gave way before it, and they sprawled over and clawed at the timbers while a tangle of waters swept over them. They came out of it gasping and fighting for breath, and, when they had recovered, the four looked to the boy, but the captain was holding him in his arms. When he had put the boy down, and they all sat huddled as before, Sandys said again—

"Don't you be afraid, Tom."

This time the boy made to give a scornful reply. He remembered Sandys' words against the captain, and saw the fear in Sandys' eyes, and started to say—

"The captain and me, *we're* not afraid."

But the words were caught in his throat. Another wave, greater than the one before, hit the schooner solidly, like a Titan's sledge. She shivered and leaped, mortally stricken, but her anchors held her; and so, pushed by the sea, she rolled over like an empty cask.

It was a fearful moment, that, when they knew she could not rise again. All looked to go under with her, and all would have gone under, no doubt; but the strain was greater than the lashings that held her cargo together could withstand. So it came about that the lumber, with the men clinging to it, slipped off the slanting deck, and the sea and wind caught it and drove it as a bulk toward the shore.

Looking back, they saw the *Condor*, lightened by so much and by so much the more helpless, pitched clear above the sea, which caught her as she fell, and broke her back. She parted amidship, plunged down fore-and-aft, and so they saw the last of her.

NOW the tangle of the ropes and lumber, battered and torn at and tossed, began to melt under the men and to spread over the surface of the sea. And before they were through expecting it to roll over as the ship had rolled, and drown them all, it became a raft of a thousand pieces, caught in the war of the waters.

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It was a time when the souls of men show themselves. Pierre, the cook, began to pray fragments and snatches of long neglected prayers; Knudsen and Nelson swore strange oaths against the captain for having brought them to this pass; and Sandys called upon the Power that ruled the waters to save him for the sake of the wife and four children he had left at home. The captain sat silent with his eyes still toward the shore, which could not be seen now for the white smother of foam; and the boy was silent, too, with his eyes on the captain's face.

So each after his fashion endured the sight of that clashing tumult of water and wood. The planks were flung against each other with the weight of a hundred planks behind them; they were splintered like brittle spears, with the splinters flying high and wide. One of those hurtling fragments struck Knudsen on the shoulder, knocked him sideways, and the foaming water snatched at him; but the captain gripped him and pulled him back. And they were all flung on toward the shore which they knew in their hearts they could never so reach alive.

For here and there great rifts were beginning to appear in the raft, and through each interstice the frothing water broke, as though driven through a spout. The wind tore at them, and the sleet and snow, stinging like pellets of steel, flung itself at their faces. The rage of the waters seemed to increase, as though they felt the raft as a harness that had been laid on them, and tried to throw it off.

But the men clung to the pitching timbers under them—made shift somehow to keep that mad mass of wreckage between their feet and the boiling depths. They fought desperately now, with sobbing breaths and cries one to the other; but the captain was ever silent, and it seemed to the boy that in that silence he was the backbone of all their endurance.

A great pride arose in the boy's heart at this, but mingled with that pride was the old torturing doubt: what lay behind that silence, what manner of man was the captain? Loose-living and violent was he, and careless of all but himself? Or was he the strong and gentle soul the boy had learned to know and love?

It was a strange thing, perhaps, that in such a moment that doubt should trouble the lad more than his peril, or the stinging water and biting wind.

After a while there came a mad cry from Pierre and an answering shout from the rest of them. They all saw it, a red Coston light flaring high through the mists that veiled the shore. But the light died, and the flickering hope the signal raised died too, for they all knew that no life-boat could hope to live in the crashing of the timbers, and certain it was that no line could help them where they lay.

They drifted on in renewed despair, fighting each moment for that moment of life. Mad as a dream, that struggle was, and then, with the suddenness of a dream, it changed.

With a crash, the plunging, shifting wood to which they clung stopped mid-leap in one of its great, shoreward dives. Each man was flung forward, flung his full length sprawling. Somehow they struggled up again, and just in time, for the planks ahead of them were piling up, piling high; and those behind were piling up, too, and about to bury them where they lay. An instant of bewilderment, and then, "A reef!" the captain shouted, and they knew. The forefoot of the raft had struck that reef, and the whole surging mass of timber was being crowded in and crumpled up by the illimitable force of the sea.

It was a moment of confusion and terror, and how they weathered it none knew. They only knew they were on their feet, and struggling like mad to keep on top of that crashing havoc of lumber. They knew, too, that the captain had snatched up the boy, and with that handicap was leading them, and that he waved them directions with his free hand. And presently they found themselves together again, on the very top and front of that crouching heap, with the reef beneath them. Ahead of them the water foamed, clear to the shore it was white with churning, while behind them the litter of wood came on in a maddening tumult, with a crashing like the sound of a battle-front.

But for the moment they were safe. They were safe for the unguessable space of time during which the heaving mass under their feet, compounded of rock and wood and raging water, held together. That is, they were safe if they could hold against its tossing and tumbling, and against the fury of the sleet and wind, and the

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ungovernable and rising temper of the sea. For the sea, cheated for the moment of its prey, was now more than ever like a hungry wild beast; it came raging against them with foaming jaws, and finding its reach too short, set itself with mad convulsions to tear their refuge down.

By distance, the men were not so far now from the shore, but by the strength of the waters and the wickedness of the rocks between they were far indeed. And to these was soon to be added another and impassable barrier, for the loose lumber was driving past the reef on either side, and drifting in.

The captain, seeing this, shouted—and just then a wild shriek passed mockingly overhead, and in the flurry of the air pressures his words were torn apart.

"Soon—too late to win. If any of you—make it—now's the time."

And each man looked at each other, but all knew there was really a chance for but one. Half-sailors and half-landsmen were they, but the captain had been bred upon the water as his home; he, if any man, might win through the strongest sea. Knudsen shouted it into his ears.

"You—only man—might do it."

"Aye, I might," replied the captain, and remained where he stood.

But the desire to live still filled his eyes like a flame.

So for a time they clung there, waiting for their end, but struggling against it. How the living pile beneath their feet reared and shook itself to fling them off, how the wind wrestled with them, how the sea tugged at their feet and flung at them its icy spray, none of them has ever tried to tell.

Twice, they say a man was gone, and twice he was saved by the power of the captain's arm; and always he kept the boy sheltered by his body from the full force of the elements. So it was they were all there when Pierre of the sharp eyes caught the dark huddle of the life-savers' crew as it raced through the spray along the shore.

The sight gave them strength until the crack of the Lyle gun and the whizz of the rocket as it fell to windward.

TWICE the line was shot amiss and fell far over to either side. The third time it dropped squarely among them, and Pierre fell on it with a cry like a whimper. They all fell on it and hauled away. The whip followed the line, and then the heavier hawser, and the breeches-buoy came sliding along that hawser. There was no solid thing to which they could make it fast, and they all stood straining at it, holding it against the tug of the wind and waves.

And all knew then that the great choice had come to them. Some might live, but others—and by the strength of them would be adjudged the number—must die helping them to live. Eye sought eye through the blinding spray, and a queer stillness came to the hearts of them.

The captain's voice, sounding somehow quiet, even though it had force enough to break through the tumult of the sea, came to them.

"The boy's first," he said.

No one would have questioned it, but he waited for no questioning. He turned to the boy.

"You first, Tom."

But the boy, moved, he himself could not have told by what emotions—foolish pride in himself, mayhap, desire to emulate the example of his captain, desire to settle once and for all the doubt that had troubled him—hung back.

"No, no."

"Get him," said the captain, and Pierre reached for him.

But he retreated swiftly over the precarious footing, and shouted back—

"I'll go only before the captain."

And the captain gave him a long look, and turned his head.

"Sandys, it is you, then," he said, " for I've heard you tell how there were five waiting for you ashore. Go, and may you so live that they will be the richer for it."

So Sandys got into the breeches-buoy; and while the four men put their weight against the hawser, he was pulled ashore, now in the water and now in the air. He was one upon whom the curse of drink had rested heavily, and some have wondered whether it was the near touch of death or the captain's words that made him, from that day, a different man.

The breeches-buoy traveled slowly back, and while it was on the way the captain turned and shouted to Tom:

"Have your way. You'll go last before me. But come and help."

This time it was Nelson, who had two children and one coming, that made the

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desperate trip; and so long was he in the surf on the way that they pulled him unconscious upon the bank.

"'Tis a lucky day for family men," said the captain with a laugh; and those who were left remembered that he had no family himself, nor, by all signs, the thought of one. "Now you, Knudsen."

Now there were but three, and one of them a boy, to hold the hawser. They could not keep Knudsen above the water at all; but the life-savers hauled fast on the line, and he was taken out of the buoy alive.

"Pierre, you may make it and you may not," said the captain, "for it'll be hard work for the two of us to keep you off the rocks. And the lumber's driftin' in fast. But take your chance."

"What chance will be left for you, Captain?" cried Pierre, a sob in his voice.

He would have said more, but the captain put his mighty grip on him, forced him into the breeches, and strapped him in. He took a turn of the hawser around his waist, and passed the end of it to the boy.

"Put your weight on it," he ordered, and spread his legs wide, and gave the signal to haul away.

Leaning far back, he braced himself, and worked his feet down into the shifting timbers. The boy did the same, but the hawser writhed in their hands like a monstrous serpent, and twice they were dragged down. The last time they could not get to their feet again, but they dug their toes and elbows in between the timbers, and so held fast. At last the hawser slackened—Pierre had been taken out battered and nearly drowned, but not quite—and the buoy came sliding back again.

"Be ready, Tom," said the captain.

Tom looked at the captain and then at the shore and the roaring channel between. He saw how nearly closed that channel already was, how the tossing timbers drifted in from either side, and knew that in another two minutes even a swimmer's faint chance would be gone. And he cried:

"Captain, Captain, save yourself. I can't have you drown for me, Captain."

The captain laughed queerly.

"Would you then have me deserve all they say of me, that I should keep a boy with me to the last, and let him die?"

At that Tom remembered his own unworthy thoughts and the desire for confession came on him.

"Oh, Captain, I—I've sore misdoubted you myself."

The captain answered nothing, but bent his eyes upon Tom. There was no reproach in those eyes, and no fear. After a moment it seemed to Tom that the door of the captain's soul stood wide open. And he knew then that the man he loved, who had fed him when he was hungry, befriended him when he was friendless, was the real man, his captain. While as for that other wilder side of him . . . .

Tom was in the breeches-buoy, and the captain was holding him for the last time in his arms.

"You'll grow up to be a brave man and a good one," said the captain, his voice strong against the roaring of the sea. "You'll be lonely for a time, but you'll have a home and kith and kin of your own some time. Look to it, for they are the things that fill a man's life up."

Tom got but an inkling then; but years afterward he came to understand the full meaning of those words, the emptiness of the captain's own life, and the fury of his work and play.

The captain let go the buoy, and Tom slid down into a strangle of air and water. He came up long enough to catch a breath, and then down again, and so on half-way to the shore. Then the hawser gave way entirely, with only the line pulling hard and fast from the shore; and he knew, before his senses choked out of him, that an end had come to his captain.

And it was a dead man they pulled last from the water, a dead man with the end of the hawser lashed fast around his waist.

But in the boy the memory lived, of how a brave man gave his life for his traducers for the sake of their little ones, of how a strong man looked quiet-eyed upon an unwelcome death, and was not afraid. Surely the boy's life was the richer for it, surely the world was the richer, and surely it is well to die, when one must, bravely, since always, somewhere, the record endures.

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WRITING *under* SHELL-FIRE

An Article

THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF AN AMERICAN WAR CORRESPONDENT *at the* DARDANELLES

by GEORGE A. SCHREINER

Author of "The Moods of War," "Soldiers of Fortune on the Veld," etc.

Editor's Note: In the "Camp-Fire" of this issue will be found a brief account of the author and of his experiences as a war correspondent.

THE great effort made by the British and French Governments in 1915 to force the Dardanelles and thus get possession of Constantinople, the Ottoman capital, produced anything but the desired result. It will be remembered that, in February and March of that year, the Allied fleet subjected the Dardanelles coast defenses to a series of bombardments. The works at the entrance to the Strait were silenced. Those along the Outer Dardanelles were not reduced, however, the Allied fleet failing to return after its major action on March eighteenth—the day on which the Turks had used up virtually all of their armor-piercing ammunition.

On April twenty-fifth of the same year the Allies landed a large expeditionary force on the peninsula of Gallipoli. Though heavy fighting ensued, the Turks held their ground, and during the Winter of that year the Allies withdrew their troops. This was the end of the Dardanelles campaign.

This article deals with the naval phase of the operations of the Allies, which I was privileged to see as correspondent for a large American news service, being one of two neutral persons who were admitted in that capacity. The other is Mr. Raymond E. Swing, of the *Chicago Daily News*.

When I came to Constantinople, Americans were not well-liked there. Why this should be so need not be gone into here. At any rate, all official doors were closed. I had met Talaat Bey, then Ottoman Minister of the Interior, but beyond that little could be accomplished.

Meanwhile the Allied fleet was bombarding the Turkish batteries at the entrance to the Dardanelles and with every day the necessity of viewing the operation became greater. Though Mr. Swing and I had joined forces, so to speak, we were "up against it," to use a phrase of current vernacular. To get permission to go to the Dardanelles needed the authorization of Enver Pasha, the Ottoman Minister of War. Our many efforts to meet this man had failed. In the end we decided to try a little of that strategy and enterprise for which the American newspaperman is known.

How we meet Enver Pasha forms the opening of the article, whose main objective it is to picture the operations against the Dardanelles and mirror life there during the bombardments. An audience with the Sultan of Turkey concludes my effort.

Some years ago I acquired the habit of putting down for my own entertainment the more interesting portion of the happenings of the day. In other words: I keep a sort of private journal in which I enter all that seems worth while. This article consists of a number of such entries.

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I might have used merely the data of these entries and constructed from them a very serious "paper" on the Allied operations at the Dardanelles. But that is not my intention here. What I am trying to do is to give the reader something that will make him feel that he was there at the time. And that, I dare say, could not be done in any better way than by giving my impression of events and experiences as I put them down, generally in the evening of the day on which it had been gained. While time and distance may lend enchantment to our views, they also cause inaccuracy. My private journal prevents that.

We are not concerned here with the rights and wrongs of this phase of the European War. Nor do I hold my own opinions of sufficient import to impress them upon others. The article is for this reason a narrative and not an argument. It is also a fair tableau of the life and doings of the men who gather the news, often under adverse conditions, so that the dear public may have it with their breakfast for a cent.

CONSTANTINOPLE, PERA, February twenty-fifth.

Friend Swing and I negotiated an interview with Enver Pasha under peculiar and not altogether auspicious auspices late this evening. The case deserves mention for the reason that it shows what initiative may be exercised by a poor correspondent now and then.

F. Swing and I have agreed to be good fellows to one another. He is not to "knife" me, and I am not to "knife" him—sort of alliance between two powers likely to make war upon one another. The basis of this treaty of peace is that I do most of my work over the cable, while Swing does most of his by mail. There is no real competition between us, though I can see right now where there is likely to be. But let tomorrow take care of itself. I never pluck a quail until I have him.

F. Swing and I have been moving heaven and earth to interview Enver Pasha. We have the lever, but lack the fulcrum.

Was having a quiet cup of tea, all to myself this time, at the Petit Club, when Swing rushed in, breathless and hat at a rakish angle.

"What's the hurry?" I asked, setting down the cup.

"What's the hurry!" retorted Swing with a look of disgust. "Smart question that. Enver Pasha is going to the Dardanelles tonight for a trip of inspection. May be away a week, I understand. So what's the hurry! I can't see how we are getting closer to meeting him, can you?"

In that "can you" there was all the irony, sarcasm and wrath Swing can put into words, and that is not little. I felt almost ashamed that he had caught me drinking tea. He had run, it appeared. With a handkerchief he was going around the inside of his high collar.

"Have some tea and let's talk it over," I suggested, wishing to make Swing an accomplice.

I rang the bell, and, without consulting my irate colleague, ordered tea for him.

"When is Enver Pasha going?" I asked.

"Don't know," replied Swing, not yet in the best of humor. "Here, I run around all day and you sit in the club taking it easy. Fine partner you are. Think you are putting it over, don't you!"

I told Swing remorsefully that I had no such intentions, that as a matter of fact I knew more than he did.

"If you would let me get in a word once in a while, Swing, you wouldn't have to shout so and use so much bad language," I said. "Now, let me tell you a few things, while you have your tea. Enver Pasha leaves aboard the Sultan's yacht for the Dardanelles at one *à la Turca*, which is tonight six o'clock and nine minutes, our time. He is about to go on a tour of inspection all right, but not the sort you have in mind. There is something to the rumors that have been spread by the *agence Tatavla* recently.

"The Allies have bombarded and, silenced the forts at Sid-el-Bahr and Kum Kalé. I verified this at the German naval base this afternoon. The thing started on the twentieth. There isn't much left of the Turkish batteries, I understand. What is more, the Allies have brought up reinforcements, among them, so the Germans say, the best thing in fighting ships the English have, to wit, her Majesty *Queen Elizabeth*. She was sighted two days ago by some advance agent wiring from Athens. Yesterday she was reported off Lemnos by another.

"The fleet of the Allies is a large one. So far it consists of about eight English and six French battle-ships of the line, several cruisers, a regular herd of torpedo-boat-destroyers and torpedo-boats, not to

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mention submarines, supply ships, hospital ships and what not.

"Drink your tea, we'll have to be off in a minute. The Turkish batteries at Kum Kalé and Sid-el-Bahr are a memory. There isn't enough left of most of them to show you where they were. In Fort Orchanié all the Germans were killed. Hell is loose and Enver Pasha is going down to see what the thing looks like. Do you think we can make that interview tonight?"

F. Swing was drinking his tea and consuming buttered toast like a man who has been starved for a week. Swing is always hungry, being a tall and lean sort of man.

"No! I don't think we can make that interview tonight," he said with gloom, sweetened by a liberal lump of marmalade. "Why, the man will be too busy!"

"We'll have to try anyway," I remarked, not sure of the wisdom of this remark. "We want to go to the Dardanelles, don't we? The Germans tell me that nothing can be done without Enver Pasha's consent. That consent we must get tonight."

Swing being willing, though none too anxious, to try so dangerous a game as waylaying a Turkish Minister of War about to go on so nasty an errand, we ordered an *araba* and embarked upon a weird-enough mission.

The rain was coming down bucketwise, and as we bumped along the cobbled streets of Pera toward Galata Quai things looked very gloomy to both of us.

"We stand a swell chance seeing Enver Pasha tonight," grumbled Swing.

"Can't help it. Got to try," I remarked, agreeing with my friend.

The yacht was ready for the trip. It was dark when we got to the quay, but we could see the boat's white hull for some distance, so that no time was lost in search of her, which I had feared, my knowledge as to her whereabouts being confined to Galata Quai. She was blowing off steam, a sign that departure might be a matter of minutes.

There is a high iron fence between street and quay where the yacht lay. At the gate a German sailor was on sentry. The man made mien as if to hold us up. But I brushed past him without so much as looking in his direction, F. Swing at my heels.

At the foot of the ladder another sentry was on post. He stepped in my way with the question who I was and what business I had in mind. My reply was my name and that I wanted to see Enver Pasha's chief of staff, Colonel Brónsard von Schellendorf. That helped.

Up the ladder we went, losing no time. The sailor on sentry at the head of the ladder permitted us to pass without further questioning. Swing and I looked around on deck, but could make out little in the faint light of the few incandescent lamps swinging from their wires in the winds.

At the aft deckhouse our search for somebody ended abruptly. A door opened and an officer in Ottoman uniform stepped out. There was surprise in his voice as he spoke. He had difficulty realizing that he was not dreaming. No doubt his mind ran like this: how in the name of all that is holy did these two civilians get aboard the Sultan's yacht. He said some words to that effect, when speech returned.

I introduced ourselves with what I call considerable nonchalance. Then I stated our mission in something like *sang froid*.

"But that is impossible," said Colonel Bronsard von Schellendorf, politely but coldly. "His Excellency is about to sail. He has no time. You will do me a favor, and save yourself some annoyance, by leaving this ship immediately."

The invitation was plain enough.

"But it is imperative that we speak to his Excellency," I interposed. "We came to Turkey to view the military operations. We can not get the necessary permission without having his Excellency interest himself in the matter."

Swing also made a few remarks to the same effect. The chief of staff smiled.

"Are all Americans as enterprising and insistent as you are?" he asked.

We opined that quite a few were that and more. Colonel Yansen now joined the group. He was communication officer aboard the steamer *General*, on which the German naval base has been housed. His remarks were in our favor.

"Here is the general now," said Colonel Yansen, walking off.

We followed along the deck and down the ladder.

Enver Pasha seemed very much surprised when he saw two civilians bring up the rear of his chief of staff and Colonel Yansen. He spoke German, and was half inclined to be rash and harsh. I began to fear that we might have gotten the officers into trouble.

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Colonel Bronsard von Schellendorf stated the purpose of our visit. It took several minutes before Enver Pasha could see the humor of the situation. Then he laughed.

"Always heard that these Americans stick at nothing. Now I know it. Gentlemen, at your service!"

First came a good interview—first word to the world from Turkey of what had happened at the Dardanelles. Then we stated our anxiety to go to the place where his Excellency was going.

"How do you know that I am going to the Dardanelles," asked Enver Pasha.

"That is merely a conclusion I reached privately, your Excellency," I replied. "Rest assured that I will not use it for the benefit of your enemies."

"You shall have the permission to go to Dardanelles. I think we can trust them, Colonel," said Enver Pasha, still amused by the incident.

Colonel Bronsard von Schellendorf was of the same mind.

"All right, gentlemen!" continued the minister of war. "I will give the necessary instruction. Now, there is one thing I wish to tell you. You know we are at war. Do you know what war is?"

I explained that I was fully acquainted with Jupiter Mars, having done a little work under his command myself.

"Then you know what military law is," continued Enver Pasha. "All right, explain all that to your friend. You can go to the Dardanelles with the understanding that you place yourself under Ottoman military law, and that, if your conduct should warrant the enforcement of any part of this law against you, you will not in any way solicit afterward the aid of your embassy here. Not even if we should find it necessary to put you against a wall and shoot you. In return for that you will get a general passport from me that will take you anywhere you want to go. Agreed?"

F. Swing and I agreed, shook hands with the vice-generalissimo and wished him *bon voyage*.

PERA, February twenty-sixth.

Today F. Swing and I interviewed together the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire, Prince Saïd Pasha Halim. The thing was a complete success. The grand vizier was very charming, our questions were happily selected and deftly put, and the coffee and cigarets of his Excellency were excellent.

Well, things are coming our way, and F. Swing is beginning to swear by me when he is not swearing at me. He is a terrible taskmaster.

To let us know that the occasion was no ordinary one, the grand vizier, meeting us at the door of his apartment in the Sublime Porte, said that this was the first time in two years that he had met newspapermen.

It was the first time in our promising lives that we had met a grand vizier.

As we seated ourselves at his desk, the prince explained that he had never said anything for publication since he had been entrusted with his present post.

A glance I took at my surroundings showed that the grand vizier did business in very plain quarters. The room was enormous in dimensions, papered in the simplest way, and without furniture save for the flat-top desk, the chair occupied by his Excellency, our chairs and a few more against the long and distant wall behind us.

"Your Highness believes in simplicity," I said in pursuance with my wont never to talk "interview" at first.

"My wants are not great," smiled the prince. "I like lots of air and light. What is the use of having furniture around which you don't use anyhow."

All this in the purest English one might wish to hear.

I noticed that his Highness was struggling to cultivate the beard which tradition imposes upon the grand vizier. The result had not been a particularly happy or pleasing one. The hair was altogether too thin to make much of a showing. I did not comment upon this, however.

F. Swing was taking the lead now.

"So you have come to interview me," laughed the prince. "Well, what do you want to know? Ask any question, gentlemen, and I will take pleasure in answering."

The grand vizier was as good as his word.

"The assertion made by the Entente press and Governments that we went to war to help the Germans is absurd," he replied.

The servant entered with the coffee—three cups of Mocha *à la Turca*, done to the queen's taste. The prince handed us the cigarets.

The three of us sipped coffee and smoked with appreciation. The grand vizier talked; F. Swing and I listened attentively.

"Yes, that is true," said the prince in

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reply to my question. "The Entente Governments offered us a guarantee of thirty years for our integrity," said Saïd Pasha Halim. "That is to say, if we stayed out of the war, the Entente was not to touch Ottoman territory for the period named. But guarantees count for so little nowadays—" the grand vizier smiled peculiarly—"and Turkey has had so many guarantees. When it comes to guarantees we Turks could tell a tale of wo that would bring tears to the eyes of a stone image. We have had our fill of guarantees. We want no more of them. It is going to be a sad time for guarantees until this war is over. I have no faith in guarantees.

"And then what does a guarantee of integrity mean? It means that you admit somebody's right to—well, let me say, protect you. And this, in turn, means that you surrender your sovereignty, lock, stock and barrel. It means that thereafter you ask some other Government if you want to do a thing that should be done. We have asked other governments, long enough, and the Entente Governments have been among them. We know what bargains they make.

"A protected Turkey means a dependent Turkey. We believe that we ought to be independent—more independent than we have been in the past. Others do not think so, of course. But we do. That is a matter of opinion which this war may settle forever. We are all entitled to our opinions. You are, I am, we are."

Saïd Halim Pasha is an Oxford man. His family is one of the oldest in Egypt. Orient and Occident are well mixed in him, though not merged. He is still of the East, and above all an ardent Turk.

The interview lasted the greater part of an hour and when we left, the grand vizier was on the verge of forgetting that he was a highness and all that. Swing and I found the pronoun "you" so very convenient that we lapsed to it at every turn. And I will say that Saïd Halim Pasha betrayed nowise that he did not enjoy our informality. When he said that we were to call on him often he meant it.

DARDANELLES, February twenty-eighth.

The passports of which Enver Pasha spoke did not come. Instead came word from Captain Humann, commander of the German naval base of Constantinople, that we were expected at the front. The word reached us in the form of a letter at 3 A.M. F. Swing and I had dined together, and then, just to kill time, as some people would put it, we had gone to cabaret in *Les Petits Champs*, where over cups of coffee and something stronger we spent a most interesting evening. At three o'clock we decided to seek the hay but found the letter instead.

There was a fire back of the hotel. We heard the Pera fire-fighters make a frightful noise with brass horns. Swing, in that dry way of his opined that the noise would not put out the fire. I agreed with him, and then we packed to some sort of a boat with a Turkish name at six in the morning.

It rained in torrents when we started from the hotel. The world seemed dreary, as it will when you have been out late.

At six we were on the Turkish destroyer *Peik*, and a few minutes later that little tub stuck her nose into a frightfully high mixture of headwind and waves. The deck being awash, we decided to go below—to the commander's cabin.

There we had breakfast and introductions. The cabin was small and when somebody started to smoke, F. Swing complained that the noise of the propeller directly under his seat was more than he could stand. I suspect that *mal de mer* was coming on. Anyway we all scrambled on deck again.

Toward noon the sea subsided and the crews were put to gun drill. Naval gun practise being beyond my ken altogether I looked on with great interest but little understanding. The submarine watches behind their indicator disks did fine work, but luckily reported nothing.

It was dark when we reached Dardanelles; also known as Tchanak Kalé and Kalé Sultanié. The wind was now blowing a gale.

The *Peik* remained out in the roadstead, her commander being averse to having one of the few Ottoman war-craft sit down on a rock where next morning the Allied fleet might pulverize it.

Getting off the *Peik* proved no mean undertaking. After much planning and great expenditure in voice, saying nothing of patience, F. Swing and I, together with a few passengers of various sorts, were dumped upon a coal lighter. The seas were going over the lighter. Armed with a

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leather coat, I didn't mind much. But F. Swing, who had come along in civilian garb—with a splendid fur coat, by the way—was in a bad fix. So I took my place between him and the waves, hoping desperately that the lighter would get inshore before she was full and ready to founder.

Poor F. Swing! He begged them to start that lighter. He mentioned as a matter of fact that we were ready for the transfer to *terra firma*. He cursed, as any nice boy will curse. Nothing real bad, but still very sulfurous and brimstony. He was still very patient, he said, when I suggested that we make our entry with a little more decorum.

Finally, the patience of the hawser gave out. It snapped with a bang. We drifted a while—toward the Allied fleet, and then that little tea-kettle of a tug began to churn the waters in a feeble way.

Into the darkness we corkscrewed. That lighter had the best luck I have ever noticed in a ship.

Somebody pointed out in what direction Dardanelles was supposed to be. I noticed that he was pointing at right angles to the assembly of searchlights that was cutting long, white gashes into the black and dank night. Most of the lights, we learned there and then, came from the Turkish batteries, but not a few, those that would hit the lighter now and then, came from the Allied fleet at the entrance to the strait.

With a bump and a crush we hit the pier. The old timbers croaked and moaned. Somehow or other we got on top of that pier, all wet, bedraggled and disgusted.

There we stood in the wet darkness. A driving rain was sweeping across the nightscape. Where did we have to report? Where would we spend the night?

Those were great questions. I suggested the headquarters of Admiral von Usedom Pasha, Inspector-General of Coast Fortification. In search of that headquarters we started. A town expecting to be lifted out of the ground every minute by a modern armada does not indulge in street lights. The result was that we measured every pool of water. It was an endless trip through the town.

When we reached headquarters we were very, very indifferently received. A major gave us a hint with a fence-post that headquarters could not charge itself with the hospitality expected by war correspondents. We agreed with him readily enough, but suggested that he at least think up something for that night.

Well, the major was none too willing to use his high-priced brains in so trifling an effort. Fortunately, General Merten Pasha, another German officer in the Ottoman service, turned up at that instant. The major thought quickly enough then. He suggested that we find shelter for the night in the Hotel Stamboul.

Thither we went in the company of a Turkish coast artilleryman. The hostlery was dark and cold, and deserted save for the *komarote*—to wit: manager.

Being hungry, we went in search of a restaurant. We found one in the end, but found little to eat. Had some beans, broiled mutton, and several glasses of *charrap*, as they call wine in Turkish.

F. Swing and I are in the same room, as is some whitewash on the wall, two iron bedsteads with thin mattresses and some sheets and blankets, two chairs, a rickety table, a candlestick with two inches of tallow in it, and our soaked baggage. The shutters are closed, and the rifts in the shutter are stuffed full of paper, an anti-bombardment measure directed against the Allied fleet. On the floor a *mangal* is diffusing a little heat and much smell of charcoal. The *mangal* is a box of sheet-iron, equivalent to the suicide pan of Paris. As luck will have it, there is a transom above the door, which I will open, since I am not yet ready to depart into the Great Unknown.

DARDANELLES, March first.

Paid our respects to von Usedom Pasha, Merten Pasha, Prince Reuss XXXIX, and a few others this morning. Then had a peep at our surroundings.

To the south of the town lie two coast batteries, Forts Tchemenlik and Anadolu Hamidié. The first is built around the base of Kalé Sultanié, an old tower and wall erected in 1462 for the defense of the inner straits. There are four guns, of ancient vintage, in the fort. Of their caliber I can say nothing. About eight hundred yards south of Tchemenlik lies the Hamidié battery. It is a more modern affair than its sister work. It has twelve emplacements. The guns are of more modern origin, of fairly large caliber, but are totally unprotected, save by the parapet, which is not a very formidable affair.

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The old tower serves as a signal station, and it has been placed at our disposal for observation purposes. I can see the sudden end of F. Swing and myself in a bombardment. There may be a wire from the Dardanelles to our respective institutions, but that wire will probably come from the embassy in Pera and say—

We regret to report, etc., etc., etc.

But the old tower has in a single day grown dear to the heart of F. Swing. It seems that, in addition to doting on Wagner opera, he loves old walls and such, especially when there is something grim and forbiding and uncanny about them. The old tower has all that and more. Within its sixteen-foot walls lie several dungeons, now inhabited by owls and bats. F. Swing says that it is possible that once upon a time fair maidens and their lovers were imprisoned here.

Had luncheon in the Turkish restaurant —more beans, more *shish-kebab*, and an egg on the side for dessert, also some *charrap*. *Shish-kebab* is mutton broiled on a spit—another case in which the sound of a word is not related to the thing.

Beginning at 2 P.M., the first bombardment was witnessed. It wasn't much of an affair. The Allied fleet kept well off the entrance, and centered its efforts upon the remains of the batteries around Kum Kalé and Sid-el-Bahr. Now and then Fort Erenkoi and the battery at Inn Tépé would get a little attention. But on the whole, the affair was not up to my expectations.

One of the Allied ships is said to have been hit and had to be taken out of action. However, I did not see it.

Learned today from one of the officers from Fort Orchanié that the outer positions fell so rapidly owing to the cross-fire they were subjected to by the Allied fleet. They feel confident that the inner positions can not be taken so easily.

The bombardment of the Allied fleet ceased at 4:30 sharp, that being tea time for the British jackies, so they say here.

There was much display of searchlightery in the evening. It reminded me of two Xantippes having unfriendly converse across the backyard fence. The gashes cut into the still night were beautiful. We watched the display from Kalé Sultanié to the chant of the owls.

DARDANELLES, March second.

There was a quite a little excitement last night, after I had gone to press on the entry of that day. The Dardanelles sea and landscape lay in peace, as did the Hotel Stamboul, save for the hard breathing of F. Swing. My friend had eased his mind on certain aspects of Neo-Platonic philosophy, he being somewhat of a pantheist and the nepenthe called *charrap* having loosed his eloquence.

We had discussed the wisdom of Alexandria until about eleven, when my eyes closed and my ears fell to sleep.

Wommmp!

F. Swing was sitting up in bed when I had come to realize that a shell had exploded not far from the hotel. Just then another vivid flash outside broke through the chinks in the shutters.

Wommp!

"Night bombardment!" shouted F. Swing. "Get up!"

The Turkish batteries began to fire. Soon a regular battle seemed in progress. Were the Allies attempting to force the straits under cover of darkness?

F. Swing and I slipped into our clothing and boots. On the stairs—we live on the third floor—altogether too high up under the circumstances—we met almost everybody—two other guests—making for the street.

It was our intention to get to our post of observation—the Tower of Kalé Sultanié. But the post was about eight minutes away. Before we got across the large barrack yard to the north of the tower, the bombardment was over.

Instead of going to the tower, we went to the remains of an old sea-wall. From there we saw what had given all the trouble. The disturber of our peace, a British scout-boat, was making for the entrance of the Dardanelles as fast as steam could push her. The Turkish searchlights were lighting up her hull and heels. As the ship came within range of a Turkish howitzer battery she drew a few more shells. From the searchlighted sea near her the water rose in columns resembling in color huge elongated pearls.

F. Swing and I stayed at the sea-wall until the reserve projectors of the Turks died out like sparks of coal in a heap of ashes.

This morning the wind was blowing about forty miles an hour. The white horses

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were racing on Erenkoi Bay. But the sky cleared up and the chances for another bombardment were good.

A little before noon four line-ships of the British—*Majestic*, *Victoria* and *Agamemnon* types—entered the bay. Two smaller ships, which had passed the entrance of the straits with their big sisters, thought it best to withdraw.

The four ships milled around a great deal, but drew no fire. The Turks are a little short of ammunition, I think, and fire only when the target is good. After ten minutes of milling, the smaller of the four ships also withdrew. Then the fun commenced.

Large columns of yellow fire leaped from the main batteries of the three ships. Huge clouds of reddish smoke rose, a crash came and simultaneously a column of earth and smoke would rise near the battery at Dardanos. Some Allied aviators had sailed over this position yesterday, preparatory to the effort of artillery that was to silence the guns there.

But the fire of the Allied ships was very poor. It was either short, and then the shells exploded on the long slope in front of the battery, or it was long and went into the wide meadow space behind.

For about two hours the fire was kept up by the Allies. The Turks didn't fire a gun. The bombardment seemed a very one-sided affair.

The tower gave an excellent view of the position under fire. What I can not understand is that none of the Allies' shells hit the spot where I could see the turrets of the Dardanos position.

For about two hours the fort was the center of the Allied fire. No damage was done, however. The aim may have been due to the sea, which was still high.

The Allied fleet remained in the bay until about five—tea time. As they withdrew the Turkish howitzers near the entrance fired a parting salute—three hits. After all the howitzer is a mere mosquito when it comes to measuring its strength with armor. The case is more serious when the deck of the ship is hit, and when this deck, as is usually the case, is not protected by armor.

DARDANELLES, March third.

F. Swing does not like the food in the Turkish restaurants—nor do the *Herren* Schwedler and Gruenwald, correspondents of the Wolff Bureau and *Vossische Zeitung*, respectively. We have started a *ménage*, therefore. That is to say, the mess was decided upon after it had been learned that I can cook; and after it had been made clear that all the chores would have to be done by the other participants in the mess.

We went out and bought everything needed in a regulation war correspondent's household, of which *charrap* and other strong drink are essentials, of course.

So the *mangal*—a large four-legged iron pan with charcoal in it—is in position. On it stands a stew-pot, from which emanates a fine smell. I preside over that pot, as was agreed. Far be it from me to eat what editorial-office-trained war correspondents would cook. I am an old soldier and have learned that the commissary department, and all that appertains thereto, can not be given too much care.

This is the first meal I am preparing for those wolves. They sat around on the beds and were in the way. So I chased them down-stairs—to watch the sad and hungry sea waves breaking against the quay.

Pièce de résistance is a stew, of course. A stew made of beef, accompanied by potatoes, onions and a few other things. There will be roly-poly, a sort of plum-dough of which I am a master. Also *café à la Turca*, which I have learned to make.

While the stew is in progress I am surveying the land and seascape from the window.

In front of the Hotel Stamboul runs a long stone quay from which jetties stretch into the bay. To the jetties are tied several score of lateen-rigged sailing vessels, known locally as *mahones*. The Greek sailors and Turkish soldiers pile into the boats things needed by the Ottoman troops on Gallipoli, across the strait. Even horses are "thrown" into the deep bottoms of the craft. I can't imagine how they are going to get them out again. Well, that is their business.

Across the strait lies the town of Kilid-il-Bahr, and to the south of it the batteries known by that name generally. It is a very pretty place, is Kilid-il-Bahr. Against the dark hillside shows a group of red roofs, broken here and there by the timid, sappy green of Spring, and pierced, as it were, by a dozen minarets. To the north lies a Turkish cemetery with its many white gravestones and mourning cypresses. To the

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south the green glacis, gray parapets and traverses of the batteries which must do herculean work, if the Allies are to be kept from getting to Constantinople.

I find it odd that the revetments of the parapets close to the water's edge still show their white masonry. What an excellent mark for the Allied gunners.

Across from Dardanelles, toward the north, but also on the Anatolian shore, lies another coast battery, Anadolu Medjidié. It too has a white streak where the revet is. These Turks are certainly careless.

Stew time!

DARDANELLES, March fourth.

More bombardment today. Five Allied ships of the line pelted, for all they were worth, some hillside above Erenkoi, the ancient Rhoiteion. Don't know why, I am sure. The Turks have nothing there—probably some decoy battery, a number of large stovepipes from which some artilleryman sets off a pound of powder once in a while to make the Allies believe that the shells falling near them do not come from a howitzer battery above Shavandéré, which they can not see, but which I can see.

The battery is firing indirectly, and the Allies, seemingly, take it for granted that the Turks, having some of Germany's best officers to counsel them, would plant guns in so dangerous a spot as the hills above Erenkoi.

At 2:15 things looked serious for a while. The Allied ships cruised about quite some off Kum Kalé, and one of them, of the *Majestic* class, actually got near enough to do a little shooting. They must have seen something on a hillside near the Mendéré River. What it was, I don't know, and I am sure the Allies don't know. Later the ship edged in close to Eski-Hissarlik promontory, fired a few shots at the Anatolian coast and then steamed off in the direction of Tenedos.

Learned today that the Allies had attempted a landing at Kum Kalé on Monday to blow up the remains of the Kum Kalé batteries. The Turks set upon a part of the landing force and made short work of it, so I understand. A Turkish corporal is said to have killed ever so many with a rock in his brawny, Anatolian hands. I am taking some things *cum grano salis*.

DARDANELLES, March fifth.

War came appreciably closer today. Some of it came in the form of direct fire from down the Bay of Erenkoi, and more came from across the peninsula, from Allied ships stationed somewhere in the Gulf of Saros, if that body of water may be said to reach down that far south. Kilid-il-Bahr, the pretty little town across the strait, was the recipient of this murderous attention.

F. Swing, Schwedler and Gruenwald, and their mess officer, were on the Tower of Kalé Sultanié about the usual eleven o'clock in the morning. We were getting fully familiar with the Ottoman student-officer, Fuad Réchad Bey, who is nominally in charge of the party of *harb mughbirs*, war relaters, as we are called on the white badges we wear on our left arms. Fuad is a droll youngster. Speaks French and some English, and has spent most of his life in Paris. Being an ardent patriot, he made good his escape from *gai Paris* when things began to look ugly. He got to Switzerland in time. Now he hopes to become an expert coast artillery officer. *Inshallah!*

Schwedler was recounting something that happened on the Nile, when—*whommmp!* The detonation was so close by that the party scrambled to its feet—we were sitting behind the parapet, smoking.

I saw a cloud of powder smoke drift lazily in the sunny morning air near one of the Kilid-il-Bahr batteries. F. Swing, true to his habit to look for the cause of things, just then mentioned that three ships had stolen into Erenkoi Bay. With "Weyer" and glass I established that two of them were of the *Victoria*, and one of the *Agamemnon* types. I also saw their turrets belch forth fire and—*whommmp, whommmp!*

This looked like business. The shells were exploding about fourteen hundred yards from us. We could hear the fragments of the shells go through the air, screaming, screeching, whistling, whining, snorting and chortling.

There was no stew, of course. Until 4:25 the Allies kept up the fire, directing their efforts also at Dardanos, Erenkoi and where not. They might take the battery at the foot of the tower under fire at any time. The situation was ticklish. Some of the members advised a diligent retreat before it was too late. But other members

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were against that. So we all stayed.

Many cigarets were smoked while the bombardment was in progress. Schwedler would remark—"At the point of greatest danger the hero lighted a cigaret," suiting his words by action, and we would do the same.

The fire of the Allies was not good. The ships in the bay fired about thirty shells altogether. Only nine of these fell reasonably close to the Kilid-il-Bahr works. The others disturbed no more than the mud at the bottom of the strait. The indirect fire from across the peninsula was equally poor. But there was some excuse for this, seeing that the gunners of those ships could not see their target.

At about 3:45 an Allied hydroplane came to look things over. The man drew too much fire, however, and decided not to come too close. Shortly afterward the Allied ships in the bay withdrew. That was the signal for some replies by the Kilid-il-Bahr guns. A salvo was loosed. Its effect was *nil*, as was that of a howitzer battery which fired a parting volley from behind the hill near Shavandéré.

We had one fairly narrow escape during the day. The bombardment of Kilid-il-Bahr was at its height when something went over the tower with the wail of a lost soul. The sound was not pleasant. I could hear it pass directly over us; then it was lost in the direction of the town. Another few seconds and—*plupp*. No explosion! Later I learned that a large piece of a shell had crushed in part of the bazaar like an eggshell.

In the Turkish batteries the men stood ready. A *hodja*—chaplain—was circulating among the men, when not on his prayer mat, where he would kneel and rise, to again prostrate himself upon his elbows. I watched the tall form in the long, brown *burnoose*, scarlet sash and green turban. The man was eager to be a comfort to the sturdy gunners, whose every moment might be their last. Respectfully the soldiers listened to the verses of the *Qua'raan* he was chanting. Verily, death was not far off. All the fire-control officers of the Allies had to do was to change their minds a notch or two and Fort Tchemenlik, together with its venerable tower, might be no more.

To watch a fight of this sort is a peculiar experience. We were on the flat roof of the tower, about sixty feet above the ground.

It would have been impossible to expose ourselves more than we had done. In a way this was absurd. And still we had to do it. To report war as an eye-witness, one must see it.

I must compliment the population of Dardanelles upon its fine nerves. I feared that a panic might seize the people after the bazaar had been hit. Nothing of the kind happened. Men, women and children were crowding the waterfront and watching the shells explode in Kilid-il-Bahr.

F. Swing and I paid a visit to Fort Hamidié in the evening to get the expert opinions of the German naval officers there, and to get the sum total of the day's work. The Turks reported but little loss in men and *matériel*. The opinion of the officers was that so far nothing had happened to cause them uneasiness. The Allied ships were keeping out of range of the Turkish main batteries, to wit: those in Fort Hamidié, and they had laid bare a great respect for the Dardanelles mine-fields.

I suggested ammunition, knowing that it was here where the shoe pinched hardest. Nobody deigned to reply to my intimation. I can understand that. Moreover, I did not need such a reply, for I have learned to a shell what the amount of ammunition of the armor-piercing variety for the larger guns is.

The conversation showed that the Allies were not using the right sort of ammunition for the work in hand. In fact no ammunition of that sort seems available. The Turkish batteries, being very ancient, defy the modern Allied armament by their very agedness. What might happen if the Turkish emplacements were turreted and all that goes with it, nobody cared to speculate on. As luck will have it, the modern ammunition of the Allies can not easily penetrate the earth embankments of the batteries.

The shells will bore themselves into the sand, each particle of which acts as a brake, retarding the projectiles' progress so that the retarded-action fuse will act long before a vital part of the battery has been reached. The shells would go through armor as through cheese and would then have exploded close enough to the guns and their crews to cause all the havoc they were designed to do.

F. Swing and I made our way back to the hotel in the light of the burning houses

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at Kilid-il-Bahr. The *komarote* of the hotel met us at the door. He was keenly interested in what had happened during the day. He is not much of a manager, but still we have come to like him, despite the simplicity of his house-furnishings—despite the bedbugs.

DARDANELLES, March sixth.

Bombardment today from 9:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.—from after breakfast to tea time.

Four British vessels of as many predreadnought types steamed into Erenkoi Bay, milled for position and then opened fire on Forts Dardanos, Erenkoi and the Kilid-il-Bahr works. Fire was again poor. At 10:15 the Turks grew a little restive and began to use their guns in Kilid-il-Bahr and Dardanos. Their fire also was poor.

Toward noon two of the British vessels came within range of the howitzers near Shavandéré. It started to rain shells for the British, who did not enjoy this sudden spurt into activity, as was shown by their haste to get from out that circle of waterspouts the Turkish shells were raising.

British and Turks alike got roused by that. For a time the cañon of the Dardanelles was filled with the roar of continuous detonation. Smoke filled the air and showed the sun a red disk at times.

In the afternoon we had a novel experience: that of seeing two battle-ships bombard one another with indirect fire. Quietly the Turkish line-ship *Haireddin Barbarus* had slipped into the Bay of Maïdos to take off somebody's mind from the batteries at Kilid-il-Bahr. That somebody was a French line-ship, the *Bouvet*, it is asserted.

The two ships began to mix it pretty well across the hills of Gallipoli. For a while the Frenchmen must have wondered who was returning their fire. The batteries at Kilid-il-Bahr could not have done it, for the reason that the emplacements face east and south, while the French ship lay northwest from them. But an Allied aeroplane cleared up this point in the afternoon. It spotted the *Haireddin Barbarus* and later spotted the fire concentrated upon that ship. Just as quietly as she had come, the Turkish vessel steamed up the Dardanelles.

The tower proved an excellent observation point today. But we had another reminder that the tower is about the most dangerous place we could use for that purpose. It may be good enough for the Turkish signalmen who stand on the parapet and wig-wag all day long with a mechanical precision that is a thing of beauty to see. But for war correspondents it is a little too hot. That wig-wagging, moreover, can be seen by the Allied ships, when they are in the bay, and one of these days the old tower will suffer for it.

The reminder is this. The Allied ship took under fire today, for the first time, Fort Hamidié. Schwedler had to describe many times what the hero did. We smoked many cigarets—to keep up our nerves.

Maybe the Allies thought that they would draw a little of the ammunition of Fort Hamidié. At any rate we opened our eyes wide when the first British shells fell—not so far from the wall that prevents access to the battery from the swampy meadows in its rear. Of a sudden a large geyser of blackest mud, a sheaf of flame and a column of brown powder smoke stood before our wondering eyes, and—*bang—kirrrrrrrrrrrrr plopp, plopp, plopp!*

Five heads disappeared behind the parapet of Kalé Sultanié—the heads of four correspondents and of one student-officer.

Luckily, the British let it go with a half-dozen. We put up a brave front, and still we were not sorry when the time came to leave the brave, old pile of antique masonry. I think that we gained several seconds going down the rickety wooden stairs in the gloomy interior.

DARDANELLES, March seventh.

Bombardment today—lasted from 12:15 P.M. to 4:10 P.M. The Allied ships participating were: two French line-ships, one of the *Gaulois* type, the other unidentified so far; one British line-ship of the *Lord Nelson* class, and two of the *Agamemnon* type. Little by little the fleet increases, it seems.

The Allies took under fire Forts Hamidié, Medjidié, one of the Kilid-il-Bahr works, Dardanos, Erenkoi and something further down, which I could not identify—maybe some sham battery of the Turks.

I noticed that the fire of the Allies is improving. Much damage would have been done were it not that the Turkish positions lie on soft ground, a sandy meadow land. From 1:10 to 2:30 the cannonade was terrible. Shot followed shot. The air was filled with the roar of explosions,

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echoing and reverberating from the hills of Gallipoli to the hills of Anatolia.

The Turks husbanded well with their ammunition. Sixteen shells were used. There were three hits, as large sheafs of sparks caused by shell steel grinding armor steel, told us. One of the British ships withdrew with a list to port.

We were all glad when the day was over, and when the sun of an angry red color had set behind the Cape of Eski-Hissarlik.

That is not all. During last night the Allies sent in several mine-sweepers. The Turkish searchlights spotted them and the Turkish field-pieces, held in readiness for just that purpose, proceeded to fire on the ships. The sharp bark of the fielders roused us about midnight and kept us awake until dawn. Were too lazy to look at it.

But there is no doubt that we are living on a volcano. The Turks and Germans are beginning to realize this. The population of Dardanelles has been ordered to leave the town, those wishing to remain must do so at their own risk.

Well, we have abandoned the old tower, much as we love its massive walls and sunny parapets. The signalman has it all to himself now. He is sorry, for many is the *extra, prêmière and deuxième* cigaret he has pulled from yours truly. It was a treat no doubt. Poor devil smokes *sixièmes*.

General Merten Pasha is responsible for our change of station. He thought we ought not to go to the tower any more.

"You know what will happen when a .35-er gets it," he said. "It'll crumble into crushed rock."

Thus dispossessed, I hunted for another point of vantage today—but found none. The result of this was that the hottest part of the bombardment found us between Forts Tchemenlik and Hamidié—on the naked beach of the Dardanelles.

F. Swing and my other friends turned to me for advice.

"Behind that sand-heap and down on your bellies," was all I could tell them.

It was indeed a hot afternoon. The sun beat upon our backs. We did not have a drop of water, and the Allied shells were cutting gashes in the air above us. Jimminy Christmas, those boys made a fearsome racket. One would imagine that they were coming through a tunnel in the air with a thousand wheels going on a bridge in that tunnel and every wheel flat. If that does not describe the noise, then nothing will.

Around us the fields and meadows were slowly being turned upside down. The Allies were trying to hit Fort Hamidié. But the fort lies on sea level and is not easy to get. So everything went over and on our devout heads.

It is a long road that has no turning. The Turkish and German gunners in Fort Hamidié lost their patience today. From our little sand-heap—"Fort Canard" somebody dubbed it—we heard sharp words come through a megaphone. I knew what they meant, and my heart went several inches toward my boots. An officer, I recognized the voice of Captain Herschel, was calling fire station. When next I heard the *staccato* rap and snap of the voice it was giving the range—13,100 meters. I concluded that it was meant for a ship of the *Agamemnon* class, which was then furthest in.

Four flashes of fire, four clouds of smoke, then a long crash as the four shells left the guns. The screeching of the projectiles was soon over, then one waterspout ahead of the ship, another a little short of midships, the third astern and the fourth amidships, but far off the mark.

What I had feared came to pass. Within the space of two minutes the Allied ships had brought their forward turrets face to face with Fort Hamidié and then the shell rain started.

We got our share of that. In front of us rose tall columns of water and around us huge geysers of earth and mud, flame and smoke. For several minutes the air was alive with shell fragments. Some of them fell within a few feet of us.

"You are not a good risk for a life insurance company today," remarked Admiral von Usedom Pasha, passing near us.

"It doesn't look asif we were, Excellency," I remarked.

"Couldn't you find better cover than that?" he asked.

"We were surprised here," I explained.

The admiral had a close call the next instant. He had come to the little wooden bridge which spans the Rhodios River, when a large peace of shell buried itself almost at his heels.

It seems that the Allies got riled at the temerity the Turkish batteries had shown. They started in to hammer their antagonists mercilessly, without knowing, no

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doubt, that most of their shells were going down near a group of very harmless correspondents.

More and more savage grew their temper. The thing I had so often borne in mind happened. I was looking at the tower of Kalé Sultanié, almost directly back of us, when I saw a great cloud of smoke rise over the wall encircling the tower and the battery. Then came a deafening detonation, followed by a rain of rock. For a while I thought that the old friend had come down, but when the smoke drifted off I saw him rear his old gray head as proudly as ever.

Two shells hit houses near the tower. Evidently the British and French wanted to bring the old pile down.

This little diversion over, the Allies took Fort Hamidié once more under fire. Two shells landed plumb in the yard of the fort —a few feet behind the emplacement revet. Another shell tore down the barracks of the fort, and still another lifted off much of the earth on a traverse.

We all had large wads of cotton in our ears by that time. Some of us wished that we were in Chicago, or at least Constantinople. Would that bombardment never cease!

Hamidié was at it again, drawing more shells for us. Every shell that flew high or a little to the north of the fort exploded for our benefit. Fort Medjidié joined. Dardanos began to bark. Erenkoi mixed in. The howitzer battery had to be heard from, of course.

If this general mêlée was undertaken to call the dogs off Fort Hamidié, it failed. The Allied fleet, not minding much of anything for the first time, was sending salvo after salvo from its twin and triplet turrets. Its temper was high and roused and rather impotent, I thought. Trains of shells went through that imaginary tunnel in the air, howling, shrieking, moaning; explosion followed explosion, water columns and mud geysers rose and fell like parts of some madcap stage scenery. In Dardanelles the houses went down, a fire had started there; in Kilid-il-Bahr the same thing occurred—but military damage there was none, so far as I could see.

At about three o'clock my friends thought that was more than they could stand. None of them had been under serious fire before. Even Schwedler's cigaret practise failed to soothe nerves now. Poor Fuad was sitting alongside of me, confiding to me his fears, which I found natural for one so young.

I had seen some pretty artillery work along the Tugela River, in the late Boer War, but had to confess that here was something new to me. Finally, I submitted the matter to a vote. First there was a majority for immediate withdrawal to a safer spot. I made it unanimous, having held out merely because of an ex-artillery officer everybody would expect that.

I suggested, and then ordered, that our retreat be made in dignified fashion.

"No running," I said. "I'll make the pace. The fellow who gets ahead of me gets no supper tonight."

The boys behaved remarkably well. As we reached the outer wall of Kalé Sultanié, the one close to the banks of the Rhodios, a shell exploded on the beach, a scant fifty feet away. Luckily, the range of "spread" of the fragments lay in front of us. But not a foot moved in quicker tempo. Another shell exploded in the rear of the old barrack building south of the tower. The air pressure from the explosion sent every window-pane sailing. We sidestepped the flying glass, and reached the main wall around the tower.

Traversing the yard I saw where the shell I had seen explode earlier had landed—right at the foot of the venerable old landmark. But the *kulle Kalé Sultanié* stood. It still reared its broad and defiance-breathing sides into the shot-rent air.

There is a sort of tunnel north of the tower. Through it access is gained to the yard. I suggested that we stay there for a while. But I had hardly done that when I noticed that a great deal of ammunition had been piled up near the entrance to the tunnel and under the lee of the old tower and its mighty walls.

That did not appeal to me. So I led the way down to the old breakwater.

The heat and excitement had made us thirsty. Nor was the old breakwater quite suited for observation purposes. The glacis of Fort Tchemenlik prevented our seeing Fort Dardanos and parts of Fort Hamidié.

There was a little Turkish *café han* not far from us. It stands on piles in the bay, far enough out to give a free view of the Gallipoli shore, Erenkoi Bay and the Anatolian shore.

But it was not so easy to get there. We

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had hardly started when a large shell exploded in the shallow water in front of the barrack yard north of the tower. Fractured steel and torn copper shreds descended about us in fine shape. We went down on our stomachs to let more fragments sail over us. And then—somewhat angered by the conduct of one of the party—I passed around the word that I was tired of making a show of myself and that everybody would have to march on without further kow-towing to shells or anything else. That helped.

The *han* was filled with Turks and Greeks, watching the bombardmen over cups of coffee. They seemed to feel perfectly safe in the little shack. The fatalism of the East is a blessing in moments such as these.

F. Swing had ten cups of tea. I can swear to that. I had six or seven, and the others were equally liberal with themselves.

Soon the last shell came into the Kilid-il-Bahr works across the strait from us. Then the British fleet headed for the entrance to have tea also, I presume. They had done a good day's work, as indeed had all of us. For full measure in hard luck I will mention that a piece of a shell demolished a cookshop across the way from the little café by the time we had the fourth helping of tea.

DARDANELLES, March eighth. The migration of the Dardanellians is in full swing. What they saw of yesterday's bombardment was enough for them. The demolition of part of the bazaar and the cookshop convinced them that things are really as bad as the *kaimmakam* and military commander had said in their proclamation.

Since three this morning they have embarked upon *mahones* under the windows of the Hotel Stamboul. It is a strange crowd which force of circumstances drives into parts unknown to them. Some of them have too much baggage for the journey, others have not enough.

Embarkation would make rapid headway if it kept pace with the noise that attends all effort, even the slightest. The men, women and children crowd and jostle one another. The policemen and soldiers shout at the top of their voices, but fail to bring order into this hopeless chaos of panic-stricken people. The sailors swear in floods. It is bedlam!

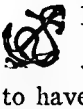
What a crowd! Most of the women wear Turkish garb, a sort of rompers, tied at the ankles, and a waist of some fancifully flowered stuff. In case of the Turkish woman a *yashmak*—veil—and *feredchi*—a sort of cloak—are added to this. The Greek women and girls have a shawl tied over their hair.

The men in their loose pants and high boots, richly colored waistbands and colored shirts make a better impression than the women. Greek and Turk wear the red fez, badge of their allegiance to the Sultan, or if not that, signal of their Ottoman citizenship. Here and there is a Turk in a white pair of pants, loose about the hips, but very tight just above the knee and from there down. His feet are in *opankas*—sandals.

The insular Greeks, from Lemnos, Imbros and other islands have their own garb—a pair of very generous pants joined together near the knee with enough of the fabric to permit a good stride. When not in motion the superfluity of cloth between the knees gives the impression of being a bag. I can not say that I admire this habit. It is most ungainly.

Back and forth the crowd surged all day long. When night came but relatively few had gotten away. Those wealthy enough to do so had hired the *mahone* to their destination, while the poorer families were taken aboard two steamers which the Ottoman Government had sent down the Dardanelles for the purpose. Passage had to be paid, however.

I wondered what would become of many of the pretty Greek girls when they got to Constantinople. *Qui vivra verra.*



DARDANELLES, March ninth. With the Allied fleet not in sight, we made up our minds about noon to have a look at the Kilid-il-Bahr works. The pounding they have received should give a good picture of defense matters along the Dardanelles.

F. Swing and I hired a small *mahone* and set out. The fact that we had to sail around the mine-field made the cruise pleasantly long enough, though point of embarkation lies from point of debarkation not more than thirteen hundred and fifty meters, to be exact.

The commander of the Kilid-il-Bahr works received us very pleasantly. After we had had a cup of his best coffee, as he

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nsisted, we made a round of the various batteries and looked over things.

To date the Allies have thrown into the batteries three hundred and fifty-four shells of large caliber. The damage done is small—ridiculously small. Not a single battery has been damaged; not a single piece is out of action. Destroyed are: a small barrack, several sheds, three living-houses and several barns. Partly destroyed: a large barrack and five other buildings. For three hundred and fifty-four shells, some of them 15½-inchers, that is a very poor showing.

Two men dead and seven wounded is the total loss in men, so I am informed. I am inclined to believe this, for the reason that none of the buildings destroyed by the shells and resulting fires were tenanted at the time.

The Allies have made a bad mistake in their tactics so far. It is all very well to stay out of range of the coast batteries, but the drawback of this "safety-first" policy is that no matter how good your guns and shells, no matter how proficient your gunners, you don't get anywhere. Kilid-il-Bahr shows that.

The French engineer who laid out the batteries, some of them in 1835, had several very sound military notions. One of them is that the battery must lie in soft ground. The other is that it must be well concealed, and that if it can not be concealed, it must lie on the line of the horizon. If the actual horizon—ground against the sky—can not be utilized then some other horizon, such as a ridge against a far-off background, will do excellent service. All this holds good in the case of direct fire. In indirect fire these factors count for little, even that of the soft ground becomes highly negligible with high-angle guns, such as are used mostly for indirect fire.

I voted Kilid-il-Bahr no mean proposition to untie. The result of the indirect fire of the French line-ship had been nil.

The commandant was a merry soul.

"There is lots of room around the batteries," he said. "The shells have every chance to fall soft."

Then he guided us to a place, where, as he put it, he would show us a strange visitor. The visitor turned out to be a 38.1 shell—alleged to come from the *Oueen Elizabeth*. It had not exploded. The one we saw was one of three which had come to earth gently, it would seem. It lay out in an open field, at the end of a little rut it had plowed during landing. Its steel cap lay four feet ahead. The case is very interesting. In view of the great range of the guns of *Queen Bess* the shells in question must have come from the maximum distance they would travel. What that is I don't know.

Certain it is merely that the huge projectiles reached the field behind the batteries at a speed of about twenty miles an hour, basing this calculation on the nature of the rut. I examined the loamy soil where the shell had first "sat down" and found that its revolutions around its own axis had been reduced to a minimum, my judgment being based on the imprint left in the damp loam by the ridges in the copper band.

Not all of the *Queen's* shells had come from that distance, however. One of them had exploded—with such a development of heat that the inside of the huge crater had been burned into hard, brown brick.

After the inspection of the batteries, F. Swing and I strolled through the town of Kilid-il-Bahr. Very interesting place! The houses—most of them evacuated—are neatly painted. Through the latticed windows, and from the *shahnichins*, showed dainty scrim curtains. Over the garden-walls peeped cherry, plum, peach, apple and almond trees, gaily decked out in all their colors. The green on the trees was very fresh. The sky was blue and the Dardanelles a riot in water tints. Beside the white minaret the dark green of the cypress reached heavenward.

Near the water's edge lies the counterpart of Kalé Sultanié, erected by Sultan Mohammed II., in 1462. The old castle is elliptic in form, so is the tower.

F. Swing and I ascended the mountain back of Kilid-il-Bahr to take a look at the wireless station. Thence we strolled through some fine fields and vineyards. It was well to be out on so fine a day, and not hear, for once, the boom of guns. A Turkish shepherd, minding some three-score of sheep, and playing the *kawal*, helped to make this picture of peace complete.

There was a wind from the south. It had swept into the Dardanelles a dense haze, so that sighting at eighteen thousand yards or so was out of the question.

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DARDANELLES, March tenth. During the day I watched sparrows and camel trains in front of the little café and was photographed and cinematographed innumerable times. Later F. Swing and I repaired to a deserted Greek house to have a concert. Swing knows Wagner by heart. We had an enjoyable time. Might just as well make the best of it. We don't know when the hazy weather will cease and thus bring on another instalment of bombardments.

In the evening we went to dine with a Turkish staff officer.

Our host proved to be a very modern Turk. For one thing he is an agnostic. The teachings of Mohammed, he says, are philosophy to him, and not good philosophy at that. He thinks that Moses made a better job of his sanitary laws. Even to Moses he will not leave all the world usually gives him. The ethics of Moses, says the staff officer, were known to the Sumerians and the Chaldeans and all the others who lived in the East.

The man is well informed. Oriental history is at his finger tips. The customs of the Levant he recounts with the greatest ease. He named for me a string of Armenian kings that took my breath away. The rulers of Byzantium might have been his next-door neighbors. Even ancient Egypt is an open book to this man. Queen Hatsheput might have been his aunt—she may have been so far as looks go.

F. Swing was in his element. He talked of, and listened to, as fine a line of metaphysics as I have heard in a long while. The two rambled off into the abstract, while Fuad Réchad Bey and I drank all the coffee and smoked all the cigarets, exchanging meanwhile confidences having their substance in Paris.

DARDANELLES, March eleventh. F. Swing and I surrendered ourselves to the attendants of the steam bath—real Turkish—today. We needed it. Not that we had not bathed since Pera. Not that. But a good steaming is good once in a while.

Later I had long converse with von Usedom Pasha, the purpose of which was to get some information on relations between the Turks and Germans here. Those relations, while perfect in a manner, are not entirely frictionless. The Germans say they are doing all the work, and the Turks are claiming all the credit. My own and impartial judgment is that both are doing their best.

Found today that they have given poor old Kalé Sultanié, tower and all, a sort of crazy-quilt appearance. With black paint a cross-hatching has been effected on the gray walls. Well, it had to be done, to the great sorrow of the Turks, who love the old pile.

All houses facing the entrance to the Dardanelles have been similarly disguised. Even the minarets and the clock-tower. And finally they have painted the various white revets of the forts with a mixture of tar and earth.

Tchanak Kalé is getting ready for the great event, whatever that will be.

DARDANELLES, March twelfth. That event is coming, no doubt. Last night we had a forerunner of it. Everything was serene until about eleven o'clock. *Boom!* In the far distance more of it.

I was in bed. F. Swing insisted that we dress and go to see what was the matter. Only the field-pieces—anti-mine-sweepers—were at work, so I declined to budge.

The racket kept up all night. It came to an end about 3 A.M. This morning I learned what had happened. Nothing in particular! The Allies had sent a large fleet of mine-sweepers into the bay, and these sweepers not knowing any better had gone to work. The Turks handling the fielders had let them come on and then had sunk three of them. The others went back to the cruisers that had the rôle of hen and crept to the lee of their protecting wings. One of the sweepers hit a mine coming up. That's all. Two others went down when shells got them.

DARDANELLES, March fifteenth. We have concerts at the Greek house almost every evening. In the afternoon we take drives around town and through the gardens, or meander along the Rhodios River, in the shade of some splendid willows.

A few of the inhabitants have not yet been pried loose from their homes. I suppose they must wait until it is too late.

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Right now Dardanelles is peaceful enough. The air is balmy. The trees bloom and the fields prosper. The Allies are at Mudros, we hear, patching up their ships a bit, or at least replacing the paint which the Turks have knocked off.

Sometimes of nights the tactical board of correspondents repairs to Fort Hamidié. We sup there and then consume many bottles of beer. Incidentally we learn all the "inside stuff"—so essential to the man who writes.

There have been rumors that the Allies are bringing up a large fleet for the final rounds. There is also the information that tomorrow will put in appearance here "his Excellency," the American ambassador, bound on a trip of inspection. I don't know what trip of inspection that could be. Looks more like a joy ride at the expense of the Ottoman Government.

DARDANELLES, March sixteenth. His Excellency was here today. For the benefit of the American public and the world in general he made the following statement—verbatim and attested to:

"There is nothing much for me to say. (They all start that way.) I found the forts undamaged and the situation good. The spirit of the officers and men is one of tranquility and confidence."

Well, that was just what the Ottoman Government wanted the Hon. Henry Morgenthau to say. I can vouch for the full truth of every word.

Saw the ambassador off, and relieved him of twenty Turkish pounds, which I needed to defray telegraph tolls. After that I joined Prince Reuss, thirty-ninth of his line, on a mine-hunting expedition in a *mush*. The mine was said to have left its anchorage, and we were to catch it and tow it in. Well, we couldn't find the pesky critter, and after fooling around in the mine-field until it was dark we returned.

My trip caused a delay of supper for the "boys." Now I feel what it is like to be a poor housewife. You have been to call on a neighbor and come home a few minutes late. Your husband comes home a few minutes earlier that evening. Result: disturbed marital relations.

Result in my case: I threw them out of the room.

DARDANELLES, March nineteenth.

Ye gods and little fishes! I am still alive and so overjoyed that I can't bring my feet back to earth. Well, March eighteenth will always be an anniversary with me. F. Swing says the same.

The British and French came back yesterday afternoon. They returned about five o'clock minus the line-ship *Bouvet*, minus also the line-ships *Irresistible* and *Ocean*. The super-dreadnaught cruiser, *Queen Elizabeth*, limped away. A ship of the French *Gaulois* class was towed off with a heavy list, and three others either floated off or were in tow. But between the arrival and the departure of the Allied fleet lies a day which would give even Dante a new shiver.

It all happened this way:

F. Swing was to meet me at the little café, which is our *lieu de rendezvous*, at 11 A.M. sharp. It was our intention to finally pay Djevad Pasha, commander of the Dardanelles defenses, that long-delayed official visit. Djevad Pasha had his headquarters in so outwayish a place that we had never been able to get up courage enough to visit him—on top of the biggest mountain along the Dardanelles.

My friend showed up promptly—to report that he had found Fuad Réchad Bey, and that he would be around shaved at the little café in twenty minutes.

That matter disposed of, F. Swing had a glass of tea. It was a perfect day, and I remarked to Swing that it was a shame to spend any part of it climbing up that mountain, when the paths under the willows along the Rhodios were so inviting.

"Well, old top," came Swing's rejoinder, "you are right. But what can we do? We've been here almost three weeks and haven't paid our respects to the chief guy——"

F. Swing stopped abruptly. A large shell had struck near us. A second followed so closely that the two made almost a compound detonation.

The *cafédchi* gathered up his long, white apron and made a dive for the gloomy interior of his shop. I looked around to see the greater part of several wooden houses spin madly in the air. F. Swing shouted something at me and then dodged a huge roof tile that came sailing in his direction. A piece of a tile hit me on the

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back. Fuad Réchad Bey, just making the corner of the street, put a protecting arm over his face. A shower of stucco and other building material was going down around him. He made a mad dash for the table when the shower had settled about him.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Bombardment, I suppose," I replied.

"Should say so," chirped F. Swing. "What are we going to do?"

Well, I didn't know what to do.

The few shopkeepers who had resumed trade after the seventh of March bombardment were pulling down the iron shutters of their doors and windows. The boss of a camel train coming down the street prodded the donkey leading the phlegmatic animals all he could. Neither donkey nor camel paid any attention to his efforts.

"*Bordchum ne kedar?*" I shouted to the *cafédchi*, who was wrenching every muscle in his body trying to get the shutters of his shop down. But he did not hear and time pressed. I threw the few *paras* on the table. We went on down the street, planless.

The bombardment had drifted to another part of the Dardanelles, it seemed. Again we discussed where we were to go. F. Swing, and Gruenwald, who had joined us, thought Fuad Réchad Bey ought to know that. Though Fuad wore his uniform and *calpack* with all the ease of a soldier he was not yet a soldier. The bombardment scared him more, perhaps, than any of the others.

"Safety first," I counselled. "For the time being we'll get under the traverse of Fort Tchemenlik. There we can have further discussion of the subject."

I started off. The Allies had either taken the town itself under fire, or were making Fort Hamidié their target and firing far too high. At any rate as we passed the street in which the bazaar and most of the better shops are located, two shells—twins from a turret, I guessed—crashed into as many houses.

Women and children were coming along that street in droves. I did not care to be caught in the crowd and started to sprint toward the barrack yard and the fort beyond.

So far we had not seen how many ships the Allies had brought into Erenkoi Bay. From the crashes of the exploding shells I gathered that their number was larger than ever.

I had trouble believing my eyes when, arrived at the old sea-wall, I began to search the bay with my glasses. I counted nine ships just going into milling position. Back of the nine there were others. How many I could not tell yet. The smoke interfered with my vision, and the ships, standing behind one another on almost a level with my eyes, appeared as a wall. Over them hang a dense cloud of smoke. Around the ships in position the Turkish shells were already exploding. Forts Medjidié, Dardanos and Erenkoi, and the howitzer batteries on Gallipoli and the Anatolian hills seemed to be in a frantic hurry about something.

"That looks ugly," said F. Swing, with a mixture of frown and dismay on his face. "How many can you see?"

Again I trained my glasses on the ships. I could still see the nine in position, and the tangle of funnels and masts behind them. But as I looked a smoke signal rose—a ring with a globular cloud in it. That signal seemed to break the tangle up. The line shifted toward the center of the bay, and when its constituents separated from one another, I could count another nine ships.

F. Swing had also counted. He counted nineteen.

"Well, old top," he said, "it's all over. I count nineteen. The Turks won't stand that, of course."

When next I counted, I counted nineteen also. There seemed to be two rings of nine each. Square in the entrance to the straits stood another one. It was the *Queen Elizabeth*.

Things looked bad enough. The bombardment subsided a little. No doubt, the Turkish and German officers were as much impressed by this naval show as was I. I was dumfounded.

But almost the worst was yet to come. Off Kum Kalé lay another fleet—small stuff—cruisers of all types, destroyers, torpedo-boats, mine-sweepers, tenders and what not. That showed the intentions of the Allies. They had made up their minds to force the straits no matter what the cost, and they were going to do it that day.

The first salvo from nineteen turrets hit various points along the Dardanelles like a tornado, as you might put it, with the difference that a tornado is a mere imitation of the effect produced by the

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forty-odd shells that came almost simultaneously. I thought that the earth had been rent in twain by the shock. A dozen of the shells went over our heads and mowed down the first row of houses behind the administration building of Port Tchemenlik. Whole floors, entire walls, doors, furniture, bedding and human bodies were hurled through the air. The sight was sickening. Poor F. Swing turned his eyes to the ground.

An awful stillness came after the salvo. I heard a house crash together, and then it was stiller yet. Some birds, thoroughly frightened, to judge by their fluttering, went past us so close that we could have caught them with our hands. I can still hear the gentle lapping of the water against the rocks of the sea-wall.

Another salvo came. It was of the same character. Evidently, the Allies were playing for moral effect. I was interested in what that moral effect would be. On the traverse beside us was a Turkish officer, with a range-finder and a huge megaphone hanging from a tripod before him. He went about his business coolly enough, I thought. Yet I'll wager that his heart beat faster than usual. Mine did, I admit.

The second salvo did as much damage to the town as the first. More houses came down. Through the gate of the fort precincts I could see men, women and children run down the street. Some of the women had two children in their arms, while others clung to their skirts. I wondered where all these people came from since the town had been ordered evacuated.

So far not a shot had been fired by the Turkish batteries since their first outburst. The ships of the Allies had assembled in two groups in the middle of Erenkoi Bay and were now out of range. I looked at my watch. At 11:20 the first two shells had struck in town, now it was 11:33.

A shell struck the road between the glacis of Fort Tchemenlik and the shore. Tons of macadam started in our direction. We fell prone to the ground behind the wall and let the avalanche pass over us. Another shell hit the water a little to our right. The spray from the falling column drenched us. Fragments of steel sang past us. It was evident that we could not remain where we were. The Turkish officer on the traverse also realized that. He motioned to us to get behind the traverse. It was the best that could be done under the circumstances.

We darted across the road. The revet of the traverse is about thirty feet high and offered excellent cover, as we thought. The trouble was that we could see nothing from there.

BUT we were not to stay there long. A shell hit the traverse and almost buried us alive with the tons of earth it carried over the revetment wall. I thought of the poor officer. Well, he died swiftly.

On the principle that according to the law of probability no two shells will hit the same spot within a reasonable time, we decided to stick to the spot. But another shell crushed in the top of the ancient parapet, where it joins the revet. A rock weighing half a ton missed F. Swing by a foot. Another shot past Gruenwald, giving the poor old man the first great fright of the day.

I surveyed the situation. The old tunnel gate, giving access to the yard of Kalé Sultanié, seemed the best place that could be found in that hell of exploding shells. The old tower stood between the tunnel and the line of fire of the Allies. It was not likely that both would be brought down by the same shell.

There was no use losing time in words—nobody would hear them in that infernal racket—so I made off for the gate, with my friends at my heels.

"What do you think of it?" asked F. Swing, with a slight nervousness. His face was tense.

"Nothing," I replied. "What is there to think of this? They have come to get the place and will succeed, if I know anything about it. The Turks haven't enough ammunition to weather this."

"So I heard," put in *Herr* Gruenwald. "It looks bad, doesn't it?"

"Looks hopeless, I should say," was my remark. "The Allies have staged this with malice aforethought. They have come here to get Constantinople. They may not make it today. Tomorrow they will. If not tomorrow then after tomorrow."

But my speech was cut short by another hit in the parapet of the ancient wall. There was another rain of débris. But it could not reach us. We were in the tunnel of the gate. I noticed that a young puppy

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started to race after a small stone which was rolling along the gravel path. Happy little dog, I thought.

Three more explosions in the yard behind us caused me to grow curious, and anxious what that yard and the battery in it looked like. Very gingerly I made my way to the end of the gate and peeped into the yard. All I saw was tons of masonry dislodged. About fifty tons had been torn from the northwest corner of the proud, old tower. Where the greensward of the last traverse had been I saw a brown gash and shattered brickwork. One of the guns was out of action. Its ammunition derrick was gone. Over the platform of the gunners hung the lifeless body of a soldier.

A Turkish *asker* stumbled into my arms. The man was covered with pulverized mortar from head to foot. I looked into his face. He seemed stunned. But he wasn't wounded. He had been buried under the rocks, he said, and had just crawled out. Was I a doctor? He had fearful pains in his chest and abdomen. I told him to go to the ambulance near the main entrance to the barrack yard. He limped off—each step a painful effort.

I had seen enough of the yard and returned to my friends.

What was to be done? We could see absolutely nothing from where we were, and to see was our business.

It was F. Swing who suggested that we retreat to the hill near the hospital. There was a large red crescent on the roof of the building, in addition to a Red Cross flag. So it would be safe there.

My friend's reasoning was good. The hill overlooked every part of the Dardanelles. But how were we to get there. It was a mile to the hill, if not more, and our road lay through the bombarded town.

Our minds were quickly made up, however. It was 12:27 when we started across the yard. F. Swing and Fuad Réchard Bey led—at a pace that took my breath away. Old Gruenwald, being short-breathed and none too steady on his feet, found out soon that he would have to go slow. As for me—well, I have learned that you never know where a shell may hit. The man who runs may reach a certain spot with a certain shell at the same time and get the worst of it. Though that may happen to the man who moves with dignity. It is very awkward at times to be known as an ex-soldier.

All went well until we reached the bazaar street. That unfortunate thoroughfare was paying a heavy price for the miscalculations of the Allied fire control. Whatever went high over Forts Tchemenlik and Hamidié sailed straight for that street.

F. Swing was still a little in the lead as we came to the street. It was deserted now, I saw. But in the bakeshop, which occupied the flatiron corner formed by the first street that branches off to the left, the Turk was still fetching loaves out of the oven. I was surprised at the nerve of the man and was going to call F. Swing's attention to it, when a sheet of flame leaped from the ground close to the bakeshop. Masonry came pelting down the street. A large stone catapulted past F. Swing.

A glance backward around the corner, in the manner of Lot's wife, showed me that the bakeshop was gone. That *ekmekdchi* had baked his last bread, no doubt.

It was a trying experience to get down that street known as Rue Saat. A shell took off the roof of the house. We stood in a doorway while the tiles rained down. Near the triangular *placa*, in whose center stands the clock-tower, another building caved in. On the sidewalk lay a dead civilian.

A little further on we joined the rear of the refugees leaving town. The Allies must have taken the crowd of inhabitants for soldiers—at least I will be charitable enough to assume that. The secondary batteries of their ships kept sending shells toward the road, which here runs in open view of the Bay of Erenkoi. Luckily, the shells fell short, otherwise the toll in dead civilians, women and children would have been heavy. As it was, we got no more than the splinters of the shells which burst in the shallow water along the quay wall. One of them, the base of a six-inch shell, gave *Herr* Gruenwald a bad fright, though it was merely rolling across the road.

To the left of the hospital, looking south, a large crowd of civilians had gathered. They hoped to return to their homes in the evening. Some of them were fascinated by the terrible spectacle which this measuring of the strength and endurance between coast battery and line-ship offered. They did not think that they would draw fire that far from the forts. But they did.

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A large shell came shrieking through the air, plunged into the ground and exploded with a fearful crash. Screaming and shrieking, the crowd scattered in all directions. When they had gathered their wits they made off at a run across the fields—just in time to escape another shell.

From near the hospital we could not see the effect of the Allied fire upon Fort Hamidié. Since this fort would have to play an important rôle in the day's work, we decided to pass along the crest of the hill until the best observation point had been found. We found this spot directly behind Fort Anadolu Medjidié—in the line of any fire the Allies might direct upon the battery. It was the best we could do. But not a vestige of cover could be found in the bare fields on the hill. We saw a line of small trees dividing two fields and this we decided to make our headquarters for the day, or until Fort Medjidié should get attention.

The bombardment had settled into a regular routine now. The Allied ships milled about in Erenkoi Bay in two circles, the purpose of this formation being to constantly alter both the elevation and horizontal position of the ships, a measure which made range-finding a difficult and time-consuming thing for the Turks.

The fire of the Allies was evenly divided now. Every battery along the Dardanelles shores got its share of attention. From Inn Tépé to Tchanak Kalé, and from the heights above Shavandéré to Kilid-il-Bahr, the shores of the strait were a line of exploding shells and burning houses. A fierce fire was raging in Dardanelles, and the town of Kilid-il-Bahr could hardly be seen through the clouds of smoke that hung over it.

Little activity was shown by the Turkish battery at and shortly after noon. The Allied ships were still out of range for most of the old guns, and ammunition was none too plentiful for any of the calibers.

The thing looked very one-sided. I counted thirty-nine Allied craft in all. There were nineteen line-ships, and each ship was worth in armament two of the Turkish forts, to put it mildly. I could not see how the Turks could hold their own until night, and if they did, I knew they would not have enough ammunition for tomorrow, when the Allies would undoubtedly finish the job. And still I remembered a little saying of Napoleon's, which one of our instructors at the academy never tired of quoting—"*Un canon sur terre vaut dix sur mer.*"

About one o'clock we were reminded that we were in the line of fire the Allies might heap upon Fort Medjidié. A shell went over us and dug a deep crater in a near-by field. Our first impulse was to find another point of observation. But we were tired and disgusted to such an extent that nothing seemed to matter any more.

The gunners on ship and in the batteries had a perfect day for the work in hand. There was a faint breeze to keep targets in sight, visibility was good, and the sea showed little more than a ripple.

OVER the Dardanelles landscape lay Spring in all its splendor. The fruit-trees were blooming. Meadows and woodland showed the most delicate shades of green in the bright sun. Valley and mountainside were a mosaic of the softest pastelle colors. The smoke-laden flames of the burning houses, the reddish-brown and violet powder fumes, and the tongues of fires leaping from cannon mouth, the geysers of mud and earth and the fearful crash of continuous explosions fitted badly into this pleasant picture. The only manifestations of the bombardment which I could reconcile with the scene were the white smoke ribbons traveling in the wake of the shell fragments, and the majestic columns of water that came from the "water" shots.

Little by little the Allied fleet extended the circles in which it swung about in the bay. By 1:45 the fleet milling closest to the Anatolian shore had crept to within fourteen thousand meters of the shore and its batteries. The fire gained in intensity. Ship as well as battery threw all the metal the guns could take.

Fort Hamidié had done little so far. Its guns had spoken now and then, but being trumps for the Turks they had been held in check. F. Swing thought that the many hits on the parapet which we had observed had silenced the batteries. I was not so sure of that, though realizing that Fort Hamidié was indeed in hot water.

"One of the ships is going down," shouted F. Swing of a sudden.

"Where?" I asked, bringing the glasses to my eyes.

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With Swing's direction I found the ship quickly enough. She was listing heavily and her stern seemed to be awash with the waves. The Allied fire ceased.

Instead, Fort Hamidié began to bellow. Her guns roared in salvos. I looked at my watch. It was two minutes of two.

In the field of the lenses before my eye lay a bright patch of sunlit water. The reflection of the sun's rays made it difficult for me to keep my vision on the black object in the irridescent field. The ship lay still. Her list increased, I thought. But somehow her stern was again out of the water—a sheaf of angry red flame came from somewhere near midship. The *Bouvet* had been hit again by Fort Hamidié. An explosion followed, and when the dense cloud of white vapors drifted away from the spot the *Bouvet* had disappeared. It was exactly two o'clock.

Now, the Turkish batteries were mute also. Intense silence reigned on the scene. I saw boats start from near-by vessels, their wet oars flashing in the sun like bars of burnished steel. Some men swam about in the bright glare of the water.

The loss of the *Bouvet* had angered the Allies. When next they took up the bombardment it had every quality of impotent rage. The shells came thick and fast, but fell wide of their marks. Many of them hit the center of the Bay of Maïdos. For fully ten minutes not one struck even tolerably near a Turkish battery.

The Turks were still cheering. From the water's edge came a wild chorus of hurrahs.

By three o'clock the bombardment had once more settled down to nerve-racking regularity. But if the Turkish batteries had to take their punishment, the Allied ships were not much better off by now. Several of them showed lists. Two were blowing off steam.

It was almost five o'clock when we decided to return to town, have a cup of tea, if possible, and then go to Fort Tchemenlik. The fire of the Allies had died down to a mere waste of ammunition, and soon the light would be so bad that they would have to call it a day's work.

F. Swing had seven glasses of *tchai* in the first café we came to. The place was full of Turks, smoking their water-pipes. They were anything but excited. Their conversation was as even as the gurgling noise in their *narghiles*.

"Allah has been with us," said one of them to me, who insisted upon addressing me as *aleman pasha*—German general.

We got to the old sea-wall in Fort Tchemenlik in time to see the *Irresistible* sliced to pieces by the guns of Fort Medjidié and the battery of Dardanos. It was a cruel sight.

The *Irresistible*, altogether beyond control, had drifted up in the counter-current which sweeps along the Anatolian shore. She was riding on an even keel when I saw her first. I was inclined to believe that she had been left behind to cover the retreat of five vessels which were being towed toward the Dardanelles entrance.

The sun had set behind the high hills of Gallipoli, leaving the eastern hillsides of the peninsula in a deep shadow of purple. Where the *Irresistible* stood the waters of the bay were still steeped in light.

One of the guns of Fort Medjidié spoke. As the long streamer of flame followed the shell, I wondered whether we were to have another instalment of noise and danger. Instinctively I directed my glasses on the *Irresistible*. A strange thing happened. The first shell hit the ship full amidship. A mighty sheaf of flame—white-hot sparks—shot into the air.

Again the gun in the shadow fired. This time the shell fell short. The third shell again hit the *Irresistible*.

The guns of Dardanos began to bark. I counted twenty-five shots. Of them sixteen took effect. The *Irresistible* had drifted so close to the Dardanos battery that every shot had to reach the mark.

A vapor drifted up the bay and shrouded the *Irresistible* as if to hide her death agonies from our view. We went to write our dispatches. It took several copious drafts of *charrap* before our hands would behave. We had been living in a hell all day long, and now it was our duty to describe that hell—go all over it and once more feel all that we had gone through.

By the light of burning Dardanelles—the Greek quarter—we started out to find the censors. But they had left town in the morning. They could not be found. But those stories had to go off that night. So we drove Merten Pasha out of his bed in the Calvert Villa, made him O. K. what he had no time to read, and then started on a two-mile jaunt to the telegraph office.

At one o'clock that night I cooked a

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regulation meal for my friends and made them eat it. They were dead tired. They wanted no food. But I insisted. In the morning the Allies would come back, and then it would be all over. They would have to walk to Constantinople, maybe. That argument helped.

So daybreak came this morning. The *komarote* brought the tea and boiled eggs as usual at six. I drove my friends out of bed, and told them that the hour was come. The Allies were not expected early in the morning, when they would have the light in their eyes. But about nine o'clock visibility conditions would be in their favor. I had been on the roof of the building to find that the day was perfect. The air was even clearer than yesterday, and the sea was as placid as a pond.

Nine o'clock came, but no Allied ships. Ten o'clock and still no Allies in sight. Eleven, and still they did not come. Noon passed. The afternoon passed.

We went to the funeral of the officers and men who had died in Fort Hamidié. German and Turk, Christian and Mohammedan, went down in the same plot. We said a sort of Universalist prayer for all. Then I took stock of the damage. The parapets and traverses of Fort Hamidié had thirty-eight hits, in the yard directly behind the battery were seventy-eight others. The barrack was down. Two guns had been damaged. But that was not the worst of it. The supply of armor-piercing ammunition for the large guns, 35.5 cms., had run down to seventeen shells. The sister batteries across the strait, Kilid-il-Bahr, were worse off. They had but ten shells of this character.

Well, if the Allies come back tomorrow they can have the Dardanelles for the asking. After that Constantinople will be theirs. A friend of mine in Fort Hamidié told me that the Ottoman Government was ready to go to Eski-Shehir, the ancient capital of the Osmanli. The Sultan's treasure and the Government's records had already been transferred to that point.

The *Irresistible* went down on the spot where I had seen her list. The *Ocean* was towed into Morto Bay and sank there. Another line-ship of the Allies, the *Gaulois*, is said to have gone down outside of the entrance to the straits. Four other line-ships were badly damaged. So much for the losses of the Allies. It was a very expensive day for them.

The Turkish losses are, so far as I have been able to get them, twenty-two dead and sixty-eight wounded. My inventory of the loss in *matériel* is not completed. On the *Bouvet* alone perished close to nine hundred men of the Allies.

DARDANELLES, March twenty-first.

The Allies seem in no great hurry to get the cumulative effect of their various bombardments. We are still waiting for them. Meanwhile the Turks and Germans are bringing their house in order. Fort Hamidié is putting another ten feet of sand on its parapets and traverses. The works at Kilid-il-Bahr are similarly active. Fort Dardanos has had a miraculous escape. Its guns are in half-turrets. There are five of them. All the Allied fire did to the battery was to dent turret No. 1 a little. No. 2 was hit by a fragment of a large shell close to the barrel port. The gun in question could not be elevated after that, but a little work with a steel saw fixed that. Turret No. 5 was slightly damaged near its base.

In Fort Medjidié two guns are temporarily out of action. In a neighboring battery a gun was dismounted. Fort Tchemenlik mourns one gun as temporarily out of action, in addition to having had one of its casements cave in. A casement also collapsed in Fort Hamidié, where a 35.5 gun had its anchorage and carriage badly damaged.

The list of Turkish and German casualties is: twenty-three dead and seventy-eight wounded, several of whom are civilians. Considering that the Allied ships in action on the eighteenth, have two hundred and seventy-six pieces larger than six inches, according to my "Weyer," and considering further that they expended close to eight thousand five hundred rounds of heavy ammunition, not counting several thousands of lighter shells, these losses are barely nominal. The balance in favor of the Turks increases when the Allied loss in ships is taken into account.

But we expect the Allies to come back. Some new guns are being brought to the Dardanelles from Adrianople. But I doubt that they will help much, seeing that they are only 22-cms.

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DARDANELLES, March twenty-sixth.

No Allies yet. The German aviators, who go out daily to scout, report that the Allied fleet is off Mudros Bay. Some of the ships are inside. The fleet has increased in numbers. Several of its larger units, including the *Queen Elizabeth*, have been taken to Malta. It seems that for a while we will have peace.

Life in a town that has been bombarded is not altogether pleasant. Yet it is not without its interesting features. F. Swing and I take long walks through the ruins of the Greek quarters. It is all so very pathetic. Of inhabitants only the cats are left. They come up to us and *mieew* in the most plaintive fashion. Poor things! They are hungry and nobody feeds them. On the day of the big bombardment they were hugging the walls with tails erect and their tips wildly agitated; today they wander about disconsolately.

Dardanelles is a fine place to philosophize in, says F. Swing. I agree with him—as I do in all cases to have peace. Some of the houses have been stripped of their entire fronts—as if to show us what Greek life is. It is not much different from other sorts. There is a little parlor with the usual family photographs on the walls. There is a dining-room in some houses. The bedrooms are furnished with iron bedsteads mostly. There is a kitchen with all sorts of pots and pans.

The few Turkish houses that were destroyed by the bombardment are rather more interesting. Carpets seem to be their principal items of furniture. There are carpets on the deal floors, carpets on the whitewashed walls, and carpets on the *divan*. The only furniture in our sense of the word are the little tabarets. Tables and chairs are very scarce. There are no beds. The family sleeps on the *divan*.

The streets have been cleared of débris by the Turkish *askers*. So we are able to stroll about leisurely. We always end up in the little café where the bombardment overtook us. There we sit under the elm tree, now in foliage, and discuss the world from a to *z*.

Herr Gruenwald has passed out of our *ménage*, so F. Swing and I run things to suit ourselves. Gradually we are getting back into a cheerful run of thoughts. Caught myself this morning on the landing of the hotel's third floor, singing at top of my voice, "Love Me and the World Is Mine." F. Swing says he can't see how anybody could do that.

DARDANELLES, March twenty-eighth.

Bombardment today. When the Allies line-ships hove into view some of us came near having heart failure. But nothing much happened. After planting a few shells in the Gallipoli and Anatolia hills, the Allies withdrew. Begins to look as if the Allies had given up the Dardanelles part of their program. Aero-observers who returned from reconnaissance today report that Allied fleet dwindled down to forty-three units all told. Most of them are small craft, though a few old-type line-ships have also been seen. That being the case, and my information being reliable, I will soon break camp and return to Constantinople.

DARDANELLES, March thirty-first. There is a report that the Allies have landed troops at the head of the Gulf of Saros—some three thousand infantry. Don't know what they would want to do with so small a landing party. Anyway there has been heavy cannonading in that direction. Liman von Sanders Pasha, chief of the German military mission in Turkey, has taken command of the troops on Gallipoli.

Another report has it that the Allies have concentrated on the islands of Imbros, Lemnos and Tenedos a force of fifty thousand men. More of their troops are on Malta, and in Egypt. Looks as if this Dardanelles business was to get another, and totally different, aspect.

PERA, April fourth.

We are back in Constantinople, F. Swing and I.

One of the last things we did was to excavate a bit on the site of the ancient Abydos, only Jew settlement on the Hellespont, as some say. We are the first to have done that. I found a part of a Trojan vase—a real one, at that. It was not made on the potter's wheel, was baked in an open fire, and is decorated in a conventional "black and red" Troy manner. F. Swing found several little pans, in which, as he says, the ladies of Abydos used to

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keep the ointments and *pomades* needed to make them attractive—more attractive than they were, for, as F. Swing says, the ladies of Abydos were just naturally beautiful.

When F. Swing says that he has in mind a certain Titian Greek charmer he met in Maïdos. Ye gods, what hair that damsel had! What eyes! And to think that I had not met her some ten years sooner. F. Swing and I worshiped at her shrine for a whole afternoon and then sought solace in nepenthe.

But to come to our excavation enterprise. The commander of Fort Nagara said we could dig as we wanted to. Gave us eight soldiers for the purpose. I looked over the hill and located the old city wall—at least I thought I did. But my "spades" soon hit a pavement that proved too much for them. So I tried another spot and found the vase. That being all I wanted, I suggested that we go home and leave that sort of thing to regular archeologists. Not so F. Swing. We had a row on the site of the ancient city, and then went home.

On a six-knot tub we went to Constantinople. It took us almost three days to make the ancient *Byzantion*. When we saw it we felt as all good Perotes do—for Perotes we are by now.

To the hotel for a "bawth," and then to the Petit Club where we allowed all and everybody to admire us. Our fame is no small matter. Our fame is so great that we expect an audience in a day or two with his Majesty, Sultan Mohammed Réchad Khan V. We may not get it, however.

PERA, April seventh.

His Majesty did receive us in audience. The event occurred this afternoon, the audience lasting from 2.07 to 2.29 P.M., twenty-two minutes being consumed, therefore, which is seven minutes more than any ambassador ever gets, no matter how much gold braid he may have on his uniform. But then F. Swing and I are privileged characters hereabout.

Speaking of dress, reminds me that F. Swing and I had a fine time of it yesterday, trying to get the needed things to wear. Of course, the court prescribed what we had to wear. But the things laid down in the rules are not so easily had in a city like Constantinople.

Frock coat, dark striped pants, patent-leather shoes, dark *cravatte*, standing collar, white gloves and silk hat, *haute form*.

F. Swing and I scoured Pera for these things, and being good *buscaleros* found them. But they would not fit. F. Swing is a little too slim for most store-clothing, and I—well, you can make two men out of me—average-sized men, of course.

We bought the clothing and then took it to an English tailor. He made a fine job of it. F. Swing says I look like a senator from Texas, my adopted native State.

We ran into a fine net of red tape before we saw the Sultan. The audience was made possible through the efforts of Baron von Wangenheim. But we could not go to Dolma Bagtche under the auspices of the German Embassy, since we are Americans. So we asked the American ambassador to let us have his automobile and *cavass*.

With the *cavass* decked out in his official clothing, much bebroidered in gold and made more glorious yet by a vivid scarlet sash, in whose generous folds reposed two large pistols, we made off for the audience. The chauffeur honked the horn officiously and all Pera, seeing the silk hats and the *cavass* knew that the Sultan would have visitors.

It seems that we were looked upon as of importance, which F. Swing and I have never done ourselves, I am sure. The large, gilded gate was opened, instead of the small one, and our machine rolled slowly through the splendid gardens and up to the main stairway of the palace's *selamlik*.

At the foot of the stairs we were met by the master of ceremonies. At the head of the stairs stood Brigadier-General Salih Pasha, the Sultan's first aide-de-camp. We cracked our heels in the most approved fashion and did our best to make everybody believe that audiences with rulers were part of our daily routine.

Salih Pasha showed no reserve. He bid us welcome to the palace in a very happy way and then ushered us into one of the large rooms for which Dolma Bagtche is justly famous. The room lies to the left of the grand stairway. It is a magnificent apartment with an Italian renaissance motive running through its decoration and furnishings.

"His Majesty has expressed keen appreciation of his meeting with you gentlemen," said Salih Pasha. "He is occupied with some reports at this moment. You will

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kindly excuse him, if the audience should not take place at two o'clock exactly. Let us have coffee and a smoke."

We seated ourselves on chairs near the fireplace. It was a little chilly. All night long it had rained and the wind came from across the Black Sea.

Salih Pasha was greatly interested in what we had seen. I gave him some of the military aspects of the situation on the Dardanelles, and he exchanged views on German military efficiency for that. Salih Pasha proved a great admirer of the Germans, which is natural, seeing that most of his military training dated back to the days when he had been a dashing cavalry officer at Coblenz on the Rhine.

The coffee came. It was served in the thinnest porcelain cups I have seen. So thin were these cups that touching them with your fingers might crush them. To prevent that the porcelain shells were standing in a holder of gold filigree.

The coffee was good—real Mocha, grown in Arabia. Salih Pasha served some of the Sultan's own brand of cigarets—thick things about ten inches long, of which length four inches are paper tube.

"His Majesty is greatly interested in what happened on the eighteenth of March," said Salih Pasha to me. "He may ask some questions relative to that affair. In case he should do so, make your replies brief and to the point. I am to act as your interpreter."

Four minutes past two. The high double doors of the *salon* were swung open. The master of ceremonies entered, bowed and said something in Turkish which I took to mean that the Sultan was ready to receive us. Salih Pasha said so.

The master of ceremonies faced about. As senior I took a place behind him. F. Swing came next. Salih Pasha brought up the rear.

The procession, keeping studiously to the runners protecting the costly carpets on the floors, made its way through the great *atrium*, then entered the grand stairhouse. We turned to the right here and brought up before a broad stairway whose flank is formed by a splendid balustrade of cut crystal. At the head of the stairs we again turned to the right, then to the left, once more to the right and then came to a little ante-chamber.

An official of the court entered the ante-chamber to announce that his Majesty was waiting for us. This time I led the procession—to a small door off the corridor that gave access to the ante-chamber.

When I got a view of the Sultan's room, the aged monarch was rising from the *divan* on which he had been sitting. I bowed thrice—as is etiquette, and then waited for what the Sultan would do. He advanced toward me, extended his hand, which I grasped and shook heartily.

Mohammed Réchid Khan V smiled and said something in Turkish. I caught the word: *selam*—greetings.

I stepped to one side to let F. Swing get through with his share of the formalities. When this was done, the Sultan pointed to the chairs that had been placed in front of him. We seated outselves, but rose again when Salih Pasha mentioned our names in introduction. The Sultan found that too much ceremoney. He again pointed at the chairs with an encouraging smile, and then spoke to his aide-de-camp.

"His Majesty wishes to extend to you a most hearty welcome," interpreted Salih Pasha. "He also wishes that we do not stand on ceremony. This is an informal meeting—the first his Majesty has had with Americans, with American journalists, or journalists of any kind."

The visitors bowed. I began to survey the ruler of the Ottoman empire and the first caliph of Moslemism.

The Sultan was very simply attired. He wore a frock coat of blue color, black shoes with soft uppers, a turned-down collar, blue *cravatte*, and the conventional red fez of the Ottoman. I could see no jewelry of any sort about his person—not even a stickpin.

The rather fleshy face was not as immobile as one would think from impressions gained of Mohammed V's pictures. On the contrary, there were moments when it was full of expression, especially when there was an occasion for a smile. The Sultan appeared to me to be a gentle old man, whose lot in life had not been the best, but who despite his years possessed still the fortitude to bear up under much. Instead of being Sultan and caliph the man might have been a country squire.

The facial traits of the Sultan are distinctly Turkish, more so even than those of his brother and predecessor in office, Abdul Hamid. But the face is softer.

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It lacks every index of that cruelty spoken of so much in connection with the family. The large light-brown eyes twinkled merrily at times. They also searched, I noticed.

What the Sultan discussed with us was of the greatest concern to him. I am convinced that he had not placed much trust in the reports from the Dardanelles that had been made to him by his ministers. So he was going to check up on them. Remarks he made showed that he expected something altogether different from the efforts of the Allied fleet. He had been agreeably disappointed, but was not yet sure that there was good reason for still holding so pleasant a sensation.

"His Majesty would like you to recount to him briefly what occurred on March the eighteenth," said Salih Pasha, when the Sultan had spoken at some length. "I will put the questions to you as we go along, and then I will interpret to his Majesty."

A lively conversation was in progress soon. I outlined in a general way what the action had been, what its results were.

"His Majesty wishes to have your opinion whether or not the Allied fleet will force the straits," said Salih Pasha when I had done. "In view of the fact that you have been an artillery officer your judgment interests my master."

I outlined briefly what my opinions were. The Sultan seemed highly pleased with them. I told the Sultan that with enough ammunition, and with the spirit shown by his officers and men, the Allies would never force the straits.

"Yes, indeed," said the Sultan. "My officers and men have done well. For that I am thankful to *Allah* and thankful to them. Not all of the Osmanli spirit has departed, though my people is no longer as great as it has been. It has gone through too many wars. It has bled too much. But the days of a long peace will come, and then the Ottoman nation will forge ahead."

The Sultan then turned to F. Swing. He wanted to know how my young friend had stood the terrors of that day.

F. Swing is an honest man. He explained to the Sultan that he had been scared out of his wits, been so scared that an old Turk had placed his hand upon his shoulder in fatherly love and said:

"*Yok, effendem, yok! Kismet!*"

The Sultan smiled.

"I am glad that a Turk offered you such comfort," he said. "But you do not look like a man who would fear much. But the old Turk did not use the right word, my young friend. He should have said: *Kader; Kismet* applies to the lesser trials of life, while *Kader* embraces all of our great misfortunes. *Kader* means that our fate is in the hands of the Almighty, of *Allah*—" the monarch bowed as he mentioned God—"and that what is to happen will happen. This attitude of the mind is known to you of the Occident as fatalism. But that word does not embrace our conception of *Kader*. But after all *Kader* is not everything in life. Some of us have a false conception of it. We have relied too much upon *Kader* and grown indolent. *Kader* alone will not do it, we must work."

Mohammed V. came back to the sinking of the *Bouvet* and *Irresistible*.

"It is a pity that so many young lives should have been lost," he said, with sorrow in his voice. "What is the use of all this bloodshed, this making of widows and orphans, this destruction of what man's hands have fashioned so laboriously. I did not want this war. I am sure that my people did not want it. But what can we do under the circumstances but fight valiantly? That my army is doing!

"Russia would take this city from us. I fail to see the justification for that. This city has never been Russian. We took the place from the Greeks in conquest. We will not surrender it without being conquered.

"Tell your Government and your people that Turkey finds great satisfaction in being at peace with them and that our relations are so cordial."

The Sultan rose—signal that the audience was ended.

As we took leave of the caliph, he patted F. Swing on the shoulder.

"You are a brave boy," he said with a smile. "But remember that it is *Kader* and not *Kismet*."

F. Swing said he would remember that, and that he would also remember the man who had given him this lesson.

Again we shook hands so that the cuff links rattled. At the door we bowed thrice to the ruler of the Ottoman empire and the caliph of the Moslem world, and then rushed home to cable what looked a pretty big story to us.

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THE DRIVER'S PRAYER

by WILLIAM H. PARR

O LORD! to Thee I want to make my prayer;
My soul is troubled sore from day to day.
I've never had the chance to know Thee, Lord—
Nobody ever taught me how to pray,
So if my prayer is not as it should be,
Is not as *padre* prays on church parade,
Please pardon me; forgive what I've forgot,
For at Thy feet my naked soul is laid.

If in the roster kept by Thee above,
My name is next to cease this life fatigue
And I must fall in with my fallen pals,
A clean life's page behind I want to leave.
Grant that I die where bursting shrapnel sings
My team upon a gallop toward the foe,
And when my soul at last reports to Thee
Please let me take my horses when I go.

If it is true what our old *padre* says,
That there are horses in the land above,
Are there not some spare stalls to hold my two—
My black, my brown, the horses that I love?
They're only common field artillery plugs,
As I am just a common soldier man;
We've fought and starved together side by side—
I'd like to take them with me if I can.

I know my saddle black is pretty mean,
And kicks and bites at every one but me;
Still, when I'm with him he is always good—
Just let me bring him up for You to see.
He'd be ill treated if I left him here,
Be kicked and cursed and starved until he died.
Please can't I ride him through the golden streets,
The gentle old brown off-horse at his side?

They carried me on many a weary ride,
They've been my pals, my everlasting joy;
I've nursed them both when they were very sick,
And kept their harness burnished like a toy,
I've gone with them into the jaws of death,
Gunners and drivers killed on every trip;
Their panting hides have dripped with mud and sweat—
My horses needed neither spurs or whip.

O Lord, if heaven has no stable room,
—With greatest reverence this I'd like to tell—
And if the fiery regions have some stalls,
Then let me ride my horses down in hell!
And when the grand, great, final roll-call comes,
To be the first upon parade we'll try;
O Lord of all, please grant my only prayer—
To take my horses with me when I die.

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The CAMP-FIRE

A MEETING-PLACE for READERS, WRITERS and ADVENTURERS

FROM one of our Camp-Fire comrades, writers' brigade, comes a "bye" to the rest of us, written in December. Good luck to him!

My regiment, the —— Engineers, will leave —— and we expect to eat New Year's dinner at sea. Please say "bye" for me to the Sitters at the Camp-Fire.—HARRISON R. HOWARD.

OUR older readers will remember Captain George A. Schreiner's personal reminiscences of the Boer War published in some of our 1913 issues. Since then many things have happened and Captain Schreiner has had a hand in many of them, as witness his article in this issue.

When the Great War began, Captain Schreiner was one of the few correspondents who gave this country all its news of the first German rush and the overwhelming of Belgium. Being thus on duty inside the German lines he was continued there and, during the three years following, was an American correspondent on the French, Italian, Russian, Serbian and Rumanian fronts with the German and Austro-Hungarian armies. Probably the Americans who have seen as much of the war as he has can easily be counted on the fingers of one hand.

August 7, 1917, I received the following letter from him, written in New York—my first news of his having returned to this country some time before—he came home on our entrance into the war.

I have recently blown in from Europe. Greetings:

Having made Aguas Calientes, Mexico, and Deera, Northern Arabia, in a single jump, as it were, I have been able to gather a whole lot of most interesting stuff of an adventure character. It includes the Villa operations of 1914 and my eight months' stay in Turkey, not to mention some six months in the Balkans. Perhaps I should state here that what I have is not war copy, but just personal adventure connected with the war, which I may even say of my Dardanelles and Gallipoli experiences.

I do not consider myself competent to judge what the value of this copy to you would be, but I may say that most of it appears to me to be better stuff than my South African stories. At any rate, it is more actual.

Most of my notes were put in shape as I went along. I made the mistake, however, of using the pronoun I and lapsing now and then into the present tense, so that in all probability the stuff will have to be rewritten—though in personal adventure it is rather difficult to get away from the "I."

THE above is only part of the letter. In the remainder, however, he mentions material he had gathered in Mexico and Europe—at Zacatecas, in the bandit zones, campaigning with Villa, experiences in Galicia, Serbia, Budapest, Turkey, Bulgaria, Suvla Bay, Asia Minor. At Zacatecas, in Anatolia, Syria and Damascus he was the only American newspaper man present, and the only one who ever interviewed the Sultan of Turkey, Mehmed Rechad Khan V. (see the article in this issue) or who witnessed one of Armenia's "red caravans of sorrow."

Of Pancho Villa he wrote:

I was known in Mexico as the friend of "Pancho." On a passport he gave me he said so himself. At any rate, I lay claim to knowing this picturesque character as few do.

I may add that his "stuff" has *not* been rewritten by us.

Another letter, dated September 27, 1917, gives an interesting perspective on the events set forth in our article:

There are a good many other things which might be said in connection with the article. But I feel that you, and not I, should say them. A few of them I will briefly indicate. The operation was by far the largest of its kind ever undertaken, having but a scant parallel even in the bombardments and siege of Port Arthur. Had the operation succeeded, the European War would have been over long ago, since in that case Bulgaria would not have entered the war on the side of the Central Powers and in doing that permit Germany to ship into Turkey the means needed to fight the Russian and British troops in Southwest Asia. In that case Serbia might have carried out her plans against Austria-Hungary instead of being out of existence.

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Success against the Dardanelles in March, 1915, would have averted the killing and wounding of some two hundred and twenty thousand Allied troops on Gallipoli, and that success would have come had the Allied fleet returned to the attack on March nineteenth.

Aside from the modification specifically noted here, I have not changed the copy, but improved it here and there.—GEO. A. SCHREINER.

THE modification he speaks of was a shortening of the account of his interview with the Grand Vizier. Just what things should be added by me I am not sure. The importance of the crisis at the Dardanelles is made sufficiently plain above and in the article itself. It is not necessary, I trust, to point out that Captain Schreiner was with the armies of the Central Powers during the nearly three years before this country entered the war and that he was stationed there by the American news agency that commanded his services. During the events set forth in the present article the United States was, of course, only a neutral.

Captain Schreiner, a relative of the famous South African writer, Olive Schreiner, was born in Avricourt of Alsatian parents. He is an American citizen.

FOLLOWING our Camp-Fire custom, Herbert Slocombe stands up and introduces himself on the occasion of his first story in our magazine:

I was born and educated at New Haven, Conn. How many thrilling adventures and hairbreadth escapes I had in my boyhood days I venture not to say. I remember a few instances of close calls in Long Island Sound. In one instance in a closed-cabin catboat during a Labor Day squall, when the combers swept us stem to stern, we were forced to turn and take refuge in a little cove far up between the innumerable reefs of the Thimble Islands. The big seas that boarded us broadside kept four men bailing while two manned the dangerously keeled-over boat. Being sidewiped in a leaky rowboat against an oyster stake by the bow waves of a large excursion steamer was another close call. Adrift on a raft, alone, and beyond hailing distance from shore, also threatened to end my adventurous career.

MY FIRST adventure in camp which stands above all others in my mind, was simply a matter of localized skill of a certain set of trained muscles. The event was a quoit tournament at the second encampment of the Fox Fire Outing Club, seventeen Summers ago, at Lampher's Cove, on Long Island Sound. I can recall that last full day at camp with remarkable clearness. It was the closing day of the quoit tournament in which I was a hard thrower. On that day the scores of the seven official preceding games were to be computed and the two pitchers with highest scores were to be pitted against each other to decide the championship. And for whom an appropriate medal was to be struck.

The tenderfoot games had been pitched in the morning, but we old-timers on the 'varsity bench held haughtily aloof.

Johnson, my opponent, held 201 points to my 203. We had made close scores all the week and betting was now fifty-fifty with no favoritism shown. I feared no opponent more than Johnson, for at times he would develop a brilliant run of play, an almost uncanny precision of aim that could not be beaten and seldom tied.

WE PLAYED the game by our own camp rules counting "ringers" 5 points, "leaners" 3, "touchers" 2, and the nearest quoit 1. Players led alternately, throwing both their irons in succession. These four throws we called a "heat." The game was for 21 points, the scores announced at the completion of each "heat."

The big game had started and I recall that we proceeded with almost tie scores up to the last heat. Sixteen to seventeen in my favor was the announcement as Johnson smirked one of his characteristic grins and bent to lead off for his last two throws. His first iron struck the peg, whirled, slewed off and rolled away. It was a lost throw. Undaunted, however, Johnson only grinned and bent his long supple body for his last throw. This time he landed a high "leaner," a dangerous play to follow because the least jolt threatened to jar it over the peg, in which case it would count Johnson 5 points as a "ringer," and that, with his previous score of 16, would count him out. As it stood, however he had only 19 points. Either I must throw wild and depend entirely on the next "heat" for a decision, or summon all my trained cunning to save the situation. I decided on the latter.

I DREW a long breath as I crouched for my first throw, gaging everything to a nicety in my mind's eye. I would play my irons to the left of the stake (Johnson's "leaner" was on the right) so that any collision would have the effect of shunting his quoit off and away from the peg. I uncoiled my arm and let go. But when the little cloud of dust from the dry dirt we had pulled about the stakes had settled, lo! Johnson's iron was ringing the peg! I had one throw left.

Rooters close in about the peg broke into lusty yells and whoops as my last iron dropped with a clang, with the usual spurt of dust partially obscuring results. When I recoiled from that crouched, panther-like position everybody was hooting—Johnson the loudest of all. I was about to congratulate him on his luck, though my heart felt heavy, when I noticed the referee clearing away the dust, exposing what I alone had failed to discern. Two irons lay encircling the peg! My last one, an oversized quoit which I always threw last, lay snug on top of Johnson's.

That "double ringer" scored me 10 and won me the medal with a score of 234 points for the eight official games we had played.

YES, I've traveled pretty well around the rim of this Union, and been in some out-of-the-way places, but most of all I've met and companioned with adventurers, confided and learned their life

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stories from their point of view. Particularly I have talked with sailors about the great docks on seaboard and lake. With river boatmen North and South and with railroad men of the West. But, most of all, I have visited with miners and prospectors—of mountain and Alaska fame. Several I have met, who have made big strikes on the borders of civilization, had returned only to drop their elusive hoardings. One old character, a Swede, a decade ago returned to Omaha to visit his folks with clock-like regularity every second Summer, returning to Nome, up the Porcupine, or over the Tanana Hills to his biennial tasks afield.

From all these sources, a combination of first-hand knowledge together with first-hand reminiscence from toil-worn adventurers I have gathered the materials for most of my stories.—HERBERT SLOCOMBE.

THE other day I had lunch and a long talk with our Camp-Fire comrade Lieutenant Pat O'Brien, the American of the British Royal Flying Corps who, wounded and captured by the Germans, jumped from a train and escaped after seventy-two days of hardship and danger—certainly one of the most dramatic and splendid individual adventures that have come out of the Great War. You will remember how our Camp-Fire helped get news of him after his capture. A fine chap, entirely unspoiled by his fame, and, I am glad to say, almost as sound as ever after his terrific experience. I'll not try to tell you more, for, by the time this reaches you, you can get the full story from his book or lectures.

A WORD from the authors on "The Iron Arm," the second of the tales of Rocca Forte and the warlike Lady Fulvia:

Arnulfo, Count of Rocca Forte, is about half historical. His achievement in rising from a sick-bed to hurl himself upon a numerically superior enemy was actually drawn from an exploit of Guillaume Bras-de-Fer, one of the Norman conquerors of Sicily. Forced to lead his seven hundred men out against ten thousand Greeks, when he himself was sick with fever, Guillaume watched the battle from a hill against the slope of which his men were being ground to pieces by the enemy. at the critical moment he rushed down the hill, waving his sword and calling out his war-cry. His men were heartened, and put the Greeks to flight.

We have moved up the date of the story to 1148, given Arnulfo a castle such as served the Normans in Sicily as fortresses and centers of oppression, and made him a better man than most of his compatriots were. The setting is strictly historic: Sicily under the Normans was most cosmopolitan in population, being peopled with men of many stocks, among which Greeks, Arabs, and Italians (then called Lombards) predominated. Tyranny was a matter of greed: King Roger tolerated all religions, and all the inhabitants preserved their native customs ntact, until the slow process of the "melting-pot" had worked. The scene is the north coast of Sicily, about seventy miles east of Palermo.—FARNHAM BISHOP and ARTHUR GILCHRIST BRODEUR.

CONCERNING "With Sharp Sword-Edges," Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, speaking for himself and Farnham Bishop, asks to be heard at Camp-Fire and gives us some interesting information. He speaks with authority on these subjects.

Incidentally, remember one of our covers showing an old Norse galley? It was on the issue in which "Sword Edges" began. One of you wrote asking whether it were authoritative as to historical detail. It was. The artist, Dwight Franklin, suggested the idea by showing us a photograph of a model he had made in miniature. That model was one of many he has made illustrating scenes from various past ages and so accurate in archeological and historical detail that most of them go to the various museums of the country. The one in question is now, I think, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in this city.

WHEN the magazine reached the authors they were amazed and delighted to find a cover illustrating their story, done by an old personal friend of theirs.

Another personal link in the chain is that recently Will Crawford, another of our artists, a particular favorite with you, took up working quarters with Dwight Franklin in the same studios where these wonderful models live until completed and disposed of. Some of them, by the way, are half a year in the making, for the amount of research required is immense.

Back to Mr. Brodeur's letter to you:

Some time ago, I read Lee M. Hollander's review of a story on a Norse subject by Maurice Hewlett. Dr. Hollander justly censured Hewlett for failing to admit his indebtedness to the saga which furnished him with his material. We don't want such a censure to fall on the magazine or on ourselves. I realize that "Sword-Edges" will be entirely published before any statement could be made in the magazine concerning our sources; but if you could find space, in the Camp-Fire of some future issue, for such a statement, it might disarm just and dangerous criticism. The statement might read something as follows:

"WITH SHARP SWORD-EDGES" depends, for its material, on "The Saga of Harald Fairhair," one of the divisions of Snorri Sturluson's "Heimskringla," or "History of the Kings of Norway," written about 1200. The authors have made a number of changes in Snorri's time-scheme and have slightly altered the relations of some of

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the characters. These changes are, for the most part, entirely justified by the large legendary element in Snorri's account, which makes Sigurd the great-grandson of Ragnarr Lodbrok and contemporary with Halfdan the Black, and makes Ivarr the Boneless the son of Ragnarr and contemporary with Halfdan's son Harald Fairhair. The poems in the story are, with one exception, genuine Norse productions: the verse attributed to Hornklofi was actually written by him; Ragnarr's death-song is genuine, and so is "The day has come up with din of cock's feathers."

THE statement concerning the changes made in Snorri's account is suggested on the basis of a letter Bishop and I received from Mr. H. Bedford Jones of Santa Barbara. Mr. Jones praised the story as a story, but objected strenuously to the changes. I wrote him, showing him the discrepancies and errors in Snorri's account, and I think I proved to his satisfaction that the changes were proper and necessary. But since *Adventure* numbers among its readers a considerable number of men who know the Norse sagas, it might be as well to disarm their possible objections by publishing such a statement as I suggest, if you can find space in some future number.—ARTHUR G. BRODEUR.

SOME of the letters that come in to us are delayed a good deal in reaching your eyes. In any case it takes two or three months to get it out to you in the magazine and often there's additional delay owing to the "exigencies of make-up." Also, some of these letters spend a month or more in the mail. The following from our American comrade, M. Logie, with the Salonika forces, was written October 29th and reached me December 20th—nearly two months on the way. The copy of our magazine I sent him must have been about the same length of time in the mails.

Here's hoping he was back in good shape again long before his letter reached me and that he is O. K. at this minute and now with our own forces. I haven't yet seen him in New York.

As you'll notice, the censor got busy on part of his letter, as said censor had done with an earlier one:

The Mid-September reached me just in time to act as a good stimulant and a pick-me-up. The fact is I'm down and out in a base hospital with dysentery and malaria, so you can readily understand how much I appreciated its arrival.

WELL, as regards my ailment, I'm getting on O. K. except for the malaria, which continues to give me a shake-up now and then, the "original seed" still in the system from former days below the Rio Grande. Well, it's no use kicking, this has meant a rest, peace, and a clean bed to me, with a change of diet which was most acceptable after fourteen months up in the "front line," which naturally gets a bit monotonous, although I can say we have had some bully times.

Well, to get on with the tale I received quite a surprise in seeing one of my letters to you in Camp-Fire. Many thanks for the same; it will keep some of my old pals posted as to my whereabouts, etc. Well, what the censor did obliterate was referring to —— troop, etc., in the —— of a certain —— and where the . . . . At any rate, all panned out well as regards myself, and of course, which is to be expected, did not for a good few other individuals; all in the game.

HAVE you heard this one? A big Jock (Scot) in a certain famous Highland regiment, who was one of the "first wave" in the attacking force, got his kilt full of the Bulgar wire (barb), failed to clear himself, stripped off said kilt, which was left hanging on the wire, and kept on going. Some sight! How would that do for a recruiting poster? And of course he used that bit of steel on the end of his rifle that does credit to his breed. All "gospel."

Well, as regards that transfer to the U. S. forces. I'm still in strong hopes for the same. I made a second application to the War Office for a transfer to the U. S. Army, either as an instructor or to join the force already in France. Still waiting; usual "red tape." At the same time the head guys at Washington D. C. failed to see where I'd be of any value to them. Too much trouble, I expect. Your reply to a grievance from a National Guardsman was O. K., straight from the shoulder. Some —— with the . . . 1914-15.

Well, I'll finish this long, dry spiel, wishing you the best of luck. I've got a hunch that I'll strike the old town yet, hoping it's before Christmas.

A YOUNGER brother of mine, a C. C. N. Y. man, has received his commission from Plattsburg, is at present over at Camp Upton, L. I. Expect he'll have a lot to learn yet; what do you say? All those new shave-tails will have to study "human nature" a bit, also themselves. At any rate I'm glad to see that everything is going O. K. and that "Old Glory" will soon show her weight "over yonder" and of course there will be another kind of weight back in the U. S. A. when the "Sammies" are in the thick of it.—Lance Corporal M. LOGIE, Black Watch, Salonika Forces.

BEFORE this reaches you you will know that our Navy is in urgent need of binoculars, spy-glasses and telescopes. These are things that money can not buy now, and our Navy must have its "eyes." If you have any, send them in; in this crisis, if you are a good American, they do not belong to you but to your country.

Here are the official directions for sending:

All articles should be securely tagged, giving the name and address of the donor, and forwarded by mail or express to the Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, care of Naval Observatory, Washington, D. C., so that they may be acknowledged by him.

Articles not suitable for naval use will be returned to the sender. Those accepted will be keyed, so that the name and address of the donor will be

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permanently recorded at the Navy Department, and every effort will be made to return them, with added historic interest, at the termination of the war. It is, of course, impossible to guarantee them against damage or loss.

As the Government can not, under the law, accept services or material without making some payment therefor, one dollar will be paid for each article accepted, which sum will constitute the rental price, or, in the event of loss, the purchase price, of such article.

HERE'S one of you doing a kindness to another of you whom he's never seen—except at our Camp-Fire. It's an indication of what our Camp-Fire is becoming more and more—a real fellowship and comradeship by no means limited to periodical meetings and talk on paper. As to Captain Drannan I have no direct personal knowledge. There is no question of there having been such a person, but there seems question of the authenticity of all the adventures attributed to him. Some go even further. I have seen a letter from a general, with whom it is claimed Drannan served, saying he had never heard of Drannan. But, be that as it may, he did write a book and the book is what we're talking about now:

Austin, Texas.

In your Mid-December issue, Mr. A. M. Buck wants to know where to get "Twenty-one Years on the Plains," by Captain W. F. Drannan, Chief of Scouts. Will you please tell Mr. Buck through Camp-Fire or otherwise, that if some one else doesn't beat me to it I will try to buy him a copy of this book in some of these Texas towns?

I met Captain Drannan in 1902 in Houston, Texas. He used to sit at the market in his picturesque buckskin coat, wide-brimmed hat and all, and sell his book. I met him again in 1906 in the Texas Pan Handle, on "The Plains." He posed for my kodak. I remember at the time thinking myself lucky in getting a first-hand kodak picture of this old scout before he passed out. The last time I saw him was in Mineral Wells, Texas, in 1913. He conducted a shooting-gallery there, but his health was bad. He was over eighty years old then.

Lots of men here in Austin knew King Fisher. A book, "The Life of Ben Thompson," will give a few facts about King Fisher. He is said to have been buried in Eagle Pass, Texas, 1884. I will be in Eagle Pass next month and will try to verify this.—FRANK CALDWELL.

AS TO "YOU AND DEMOCRACY"

AT SEVERAL recent Camp-Fires I've talked to you concerning something upon which I've been working for about ten years, a definite program and a definite organization for the definite work of building up in this country a definite conception of good citizenship, a definite realization of the vital need of good citizenship under any form of government or in any economic conditions, and the definite habit, practise and development of good citizenship and real democracy.

OF THIS definite work, however, I spoke in rather indefinite terms and did so purposely. In the first place, my object was to get, through these general and intentionally discouraging calls, the names of any of you sufficiently earnest in desire for better conditions in this country to investigate even a rather vague and unenticing chance to work for them and to work for them without promise of personal advantage, ease or pleasure. In the second place, it is the intention to move forward slowly and carefully, making sure of the ground as we go; there are various factors to be considered and it is only common sense that no one of them should be allowed to advance until all the others are ready to advance with it. In the third place, whatever I say to you at Camp-Fire is always written some two months before it reaches you, so always I must limit it to such things as have already happened or can be definitely foreseen.

I DID not expect, or wish, a great number of responses. A few earnest ones are of more value. The replies, in both quality and number, have been better than expected. Those who responded I ask to be patient; they can be sure they will be kept in touch with all actual progress. This is not a one-man movement; they will be asked to help in giving it its final shape. If sincerely interested and ready for hard work, not personal advantage or prominence, send in your name.

The American League for Citizenship has been incorporated. It is an organization without political, class or religious affiliation, advocating no new and startling theories of government or economics, devoted to just what it says it is devoted—the promotion and practise of good citizenship and real democracy.

ANOTHER inquiry on the West of earlier days from one of you who signs himself "A Reader." Before we're done our Camp-Fire will have collected and preserved quite a lot of pioneer material valuable to

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those who come after us. The clipping follows the letter:

Toledo, Ohio.

Enclosed you will find a clipping out of the Toledo *Blade* about some noted "bad men" of the Old West. Can some other reader give us some information on the old stages that were covered with sheet-metal and guarded by a young army of men? That was 'way back in the time of the rush to the Black Hills, I think.—A READER.

Tombstone, Ariz.,
Dec. 8.

"Boot Hill," the burial-ground for the men who died with their boots on when Tombstone was a lawless camptown, has been converted into a municipal waste-heap and is now fast being covered with tin cans and waste.

WHEN Tombstone was a "Bad Man's Town," back in the '80s and '90s, Boot Hill was a busy burying-ground. Dozens of men were buried there with the simple ceremonies of the times and no slab remains to mark their graves. Five men, who were hanged legally, and a good many more who were shuffled off less formally are buried there in what used to be known as "Scaffold Row."

There is nothing now on "Boot Hill" to recall the early days, but some of the "old-timers" recall a notable or so who lies on "Boot Hill."

"BAD JESS" SPRAGUE, noted in the early Arizona days as a gambler and gunman, was buried there after his duel with an Easterner named Bastian. Sprague and Bastian played poker for high stakes and Bastian won. Sprague challenged Bastian to fight it out and the duel was staged in what was known as "The Red Owl Saloon." Sprague was armed with two formidable-appearing six-shooters; Bastian's weapon being an innocent-looking Derringer of small caliber. Sprague lost his nerve at the stranger's coolness, fired wide and was killed instantly by a bullet in his heart. It developed later that Sprague had wronged Bastian's sister and that Bastian had gone West intent on getting Sprague.

HERE'S a job for us. Where can this comrade find adventure? What is it? What's in it? If you know, tell all of us, if it won't take too much space.

U. S. S. Vulcan.

For some time I have been studying a problem which I can't figure out. It is: where can I find adventure? Maybe you can help me out. I don't know where it is, what it is, or what is in it. At present I am serving in the Navy, but as soon as the war is over I will be free to do as I please. I have ten years' sea experience, having gone to sea at the age of thirteen. I have no education, have gone to school only three years. Hoping you can help me find what I have been searching for for ten years.—EARL J. TEETS.

NOW Edgar Young goes and springs something. Something pretty big. "What is the Spirit of Adventure?" And what he wants to know about is the *biological* side of it and what place does it occupy in the evolution of the human race.

That's a large one, and a very interesting one. How about it? Here's his letter. (It was written from Sayville, Long Island, but he's not there any more.) And what *is* the Spirit of Adventure in its biological aspects?

I am up against a hard proposition and I want to see if I can't get you to help me out, through the Camp-Fire. I have been trying for a month to figure out what the SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE is. I have arrived at several conclusions, but the more I study on it, the larger it becomes. Perhaps some of the comrades—men who have studied things out for themselves—have formed opinions on this subject and can give me a better angle than my own.

I HAVE rushed to the library and tried to find out from "the books," but they are strangely silent on this question. I wonder if it would not be possible through Camp-Fire to find out what ADVENTURE is, from a biological standpoint. And what place does it occupy in the evolution of the human race? Also, is there such a thing as INTELLECTUAL ADVENTURE?

I shall watch eagerly for any letters you print along this line and suggest that all the letters received be carefully preserved for future reference. —EDGAR YOUNG.

A LETTER from a comrade with the Canadians, telling about a little party they had between the lines:

WHILE my battalion was in the front line at ——— I was one of the battalion bombers. One evening the section was ordered for a raid—I made the usual preparations—and about four o'clock we started over to annoy old Fritzie. Everything went as planned until when we were on our way back we met a party of Huns about twice our strength. We took cover in a shell-hole and prepared to give them a hot time. Imagine our surprise when at our first shot the lot of them raised their arms and shouted: "*Kameradl Kameradl*" Well, we took the bunch back. After our arrival we were talking to them and during the "confab" learned that one of them had lived in "little old New York" for quite a number of years, and he informed us that they were delighted at being taken prisoners. Sounds like they are about "fed up" with the war, does it not?—No. 264413, L. S. PHILLIPS, No. 2 Co., 25th Reserve B't'n, Canadians.

YOU, whoever you are, are a member of our Camp-Fire if you wish to be. We welcome all, without formality or red tape. By wanting to join, you at once automatically become a member.

ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN

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ADVENTURE'S FREE SERVICES AND ADDRESSES

These services of *Adventure* are free to *any one.* They involve much time, work and expense on our part, but we offer them gladly and ask in return only that you *read and observe the simple rules*, thus saving needless delay and trouble for you and us. The whole spirit of this magazine is one of friendliness. No formality between editors and readers. Whenever we *can* help you we're ready and willing to try.

Identification Cards

Free to any reader. Just send us (1) your name and address, (2) name and address of party to be notified, (3) a stamped and self-addressed return envelope.

Each card bears this inscription, each printed in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, and Japanese:

"In case of death or serious emergency to bearer, address serial number of this card, care of *Adventure*, New York, stating full particulars, and friends will be notified."

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one friend, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. Names and addresses treated as confidential. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for business identification. Cards furnished free, *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

Later we may furnish a metal card or tag. If interested in metal cards, say so on a *post-card—not* in a letter. No obligation entailed. These post-cards, filed, will guide us as to demand and number needed.

A moment's thought will show the value of this system of card-identification for any one, whether in civilization or out of it. Remember to furnish stamped and addressed envelope and to *give in full the names and addresses of self and friend or friends when applying.*

Back Issues of *Adventure*

Will sell: 1911: March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December; 1912: January, February, March, April, May, October, December; 1913: January, February; 1915: August, September, October, November, December.—Box 978, Houston, Texas.

Manuscripts

Glad to look at any manuscript. We have no "regular staff" of writers. A welcome for new writers. *It is not necessary to write asking to submit your work.*

When submitting a manuscript, if you write a letter concerning it, enclose it *with* the manuscript; do *not* send it under separate cover. Enclose stamped and addressed envelope for return. All manuscripts should be typewritten double-spaced, with wide margins, not rolled, name and address on first page. We assume no risk for manuscripts or illustrations submitted, but use all due care while they are in our hands. Payment on acceptance.

We want only clean stories. Sex, morbid, "problem," psychological and supernatural stories barred. Use almost no fact-articles. Can not furnish or suggest collaborators. Use fiction of almost any length; under 3000 welcomed.

Mail Address and Forwarding Service

This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied.

General Questions from Readers

In addition to our free service department "Ask Adventure" on the pages following, *Adventure* can sometimes answer other questions within our general field. When it can, it will. Expeditions and employment excepted.

Remember

Magazines are made up ahead of time. An item received today is too late for the current issue; allow for two or three months between sending and publication.

Letter-Friends Back Home

A Free Service Department for American, Canadian, and Other Allied Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Others in Camp or at the Front.

Any one in the United States or Allied service who wishes to brighten the time with letters from "back home" or wherever else this magazine circulates, and with the personal touch and interest of hitherto unknown friends, can secure these letters and these friends by sending us his name and military address to be published once in this department as soon as censorship of soldiers' foreign addresses permits. In the meantime his address can be printed as "care *Adventure*," letters to be forwarded at once by us to the military address he gives us in confidence. Among our readers of both sexes, all classes and from all parts of the world, he is likely to gain a number of friendly, personal correspondents. He is free to answer only such as he is comfortably able to answer under the conditions that surround him, and it is even suggested that the number of correspondents for any one man be determined by the needs of his comrades as well as by his own.

This magazine, of course, assumes no responsibility other than the publishing of these names and addresses as its space will permit. Experience has shown that the service offered is a very real and needed one, and all not themselves in service are asked to do their part in making the daily life of those fighting in our defense brighter and pleasanter through personal friendships across the intervening miles and by whatever personal, human kindnesses such friendships may suggest.

When giving your military address make it as permanent a one as possible.

(As the magazine is made up several months in advance, the above notice will appear with only such stray names as happen to come in to us until there has been time for it to reach the camps and the front and for names and addresses to reach us, be put in type and then reach our readers on publication.)

No. 1039983. Spr. Wilmot Miller, 3d Canadian Railway Troops, S. Co.,'B. E. F., France.

No. 24477. Pte. M. N. Eccles, Q. M. Detail, 13th Battalion Canadians, B. E. F., France.

Missing Friends or Relatives

Our free service department "Lost Trails" in the pages following, though frequently used in cases where detective agencies, newspapers, and all other methods have failed, or for finding people long since dead, has located one out of about every five inquired for. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

Expeditions and Employment

While we should like to be of aid in these matters, experience has shown that it is not practicable.

Addresses

Order of the Restless—Organizing to unite for fellowship all who feel the wanderlust. First suggested in this magazine, though having no connection with it aside from our friendly interest. Address Wayne Eberly, 731 Guardian Bldg., Cleveland, O., in charge of preliminary organizing.

Camp-Fire—Any one belongs who wishes to.

High-School Volunteers of the U. S.—An organization promoting a democratic system of military training in American high schools. Address *Everybody's*, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City.

Rifle Clubs—Address Nat. Rifle Ass'n of America, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.

(*See also under "Standing Information" in "Ask Adventure."*)

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Ask Adventure

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for Adventure Magazine by our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the department in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each month in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable and standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested, inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert will probably give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their departments subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but for their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed.**
2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular department whose field covers it. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**
3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**
4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**
5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose department it seems to belong.**

1. Islands and Coasts
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, care Authors' League of America, Aeolian Hall, New York. Islands of Indian and Atlantic oceans; the Mediterranean; Cape Horn and Magellan Straits. Also temporarily covering South American coast from Valparaiso south around the Cape and up to the River Plate. Ports, trade, peoples, travel.

2. The Sea Part 1
J. P. TUCKER, Hotel Lansdale, 1410 Minor Ave., Seattle, Wash. Covering ships, seamen and shipping; nautical history, seamanship, navigation, yachting; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S. and British Empire; seafaring on fishing-vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks, small-boat sailing, and old-time shipping and seafaring.

3. The Sea Part 2
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, care Authors' League of America, Aeolian Hall, New York. Such questions as pertain to the sea, ships and men, local to the U. S. should be sent to Captain Dingle, not Mr. Tucker.

4. Eastern U. S. Part 1
RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Little Falls, N. Y. Covering Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee and Hudson valleys; Great Lakes, Adirondacks, Chesapeake Bay: river, lake and road travel, game, fish and woodscraft; furs, fresh-water pearls, herbs; and their markets.

5. Eastern U. S. Part 2
HAPSBURG LIEBE, Johnson City, Tenn. Covering Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and N. and S. Carolina and Georgia except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard. Hunting, fishing, camping; logging, lumbering, sawmilling, saws.

6. Eastern U. S. Part 3
DR. G. E. HATHORNE, 44 Central Street, Bangor, Maine. Covering Maine; fishing, hunting, canoeing, guides, outfits, supplies.

7. Western U. S. Part 1
E. E. HARRIMAN, 2303 W. 23d St., Los Angeles, Calif. Covering California, Oregon, Washington, Utah, Nevada, Arizona. Game, fur, fish; camp, cabin; mines, minerals; mountains.

8. Western U. S. Part 2
CAPT.-ADJ. JOSEPH MILLS HANSON, Yankton, S. Dak. Covering North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri. Hunting, fishing, travel *Especially*, early history of Missouri valley.

9. Western U. S. Part 3 and Mexico Part 1
J. W. ROBERTSON, 912 W. Lynn Street, Austin, Texas. Covering Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and the border states of old Mexico: Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas.

10. Mexico Part 2
J. W. WHITEAKER, Cedar Park, Texas. Covering Central and Southern Mexico below a line drawn from Tampico to Mazatlan. History, geography, customs, government, animals, minerals, products and industries.

11. North American Snow Countries Part 1
ROBERT E. PINKERTON, care of Starbuck Ranch, Morrison, Colo. Covering Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Manitoba, a strip of Ontario between Minn. and C. P. R'y. Canoes and snow-shoes; methods and materials of Summer and Winter subsistence, shelter and travel, for recreation or business.

12. ★North American Snow Countries Part 2
S. E. SANGSTER ("Canuck"), L. B. 393, Ottawa, Canada. Covering Height of Land and northern parts of Quebec and Ontario (except strip between Minn. and C. P. R'y.); southeastern parts of Ungava and Keewatin. Trips for sport, canoe routes, big game, fish, fur; equipment; Summer, Autumn and Winter outfits; Indian life and habits; Hudson's Bay Co. posts; minerals, timber; customs regulations. No questions answered on trapping for profit.

13. ★North American Snow Countries Part 3
GEORGE L. CATTON, Gravenhurst, Muskoka, Ont., Canada. Covering southern Ontario and Georgian Bay. Fishing, hunting, trapping, canoeing.

14. North American Snow Countries Part 4
ED. L. CARSON, Arlington, Wash. Covering Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta including Peace River district to Great Slave Lake, Outfits and equipment, guides, big game, minerals, forest, prairie; travel; customs regulations.

15. North American Snow Countries Part 5
THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 2837 Fulton St., Berkeley, Calif. Covering Alaska. Arctic life and travel; boats, packing, back-packing, traction, transport, routes; equipments, clothing, food, physics, hygiene; mountain work.

16. Hawaiian Islands and China
F. J. HALTON, 397 Monadnock Bldg., San Francisco, Calif. Covering customs, travel, natural history, resources, agriculture, fishing, hunting.

★*(Enclose addressed envelope with 3 cents in stamps NOT attached)*

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17. Central America
EDGAR YOUNG, Nitro, West Va. Covering Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala. Travel, customs, language, game, local conditions, minerals, trading.

18. The Balkans
ARTHUR D. HOWDEN SMITH, *Evening Post*, 20 Vesey St., New York City. Covering Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Turkey (in Europe); travel, sport, customs, language, local conditions, markets, industries.

19. Asia, Southern
GORDON MCCREAGH, care R. J. Neuman, 160 Seaman Ave., Inwood, New York City. Covering Red Sea, Persian Gulf, India, Tibet, Burma, Western China, Siam, Andamans, Malay States, Borneo, the Treaty Ports; hunting, trading, traveling.

20. Japan and Korea
ROBERT WELLES RITCHIE, Mountain Lakes, N. J. Covering travel, hunting, customs of people, art and curios.

21. Russia and Eastern Siberia
CAPTAIN A. M. LOCHWITZKY (formerly Lieut.-Col. I. R. A., Ret.), Quartermaster, U. S. Troops, Mercedes, Texas. Covering Petrograd and its province; Finland, Northern Caucasus; Primorsk District, Island of Sakhalin; travel, hunting, fishing; explorations among native tribes; markets, trade, curios.

22. Africa Part 1
THOMAS S. MILLER, 1604 Chapin Ave., Burlingame, Calif. Covering the Gold, Ivory and Fever Coasts of West Africa, the Niger River from the delta to Jebba, Northern Nigeria. Canoeing, labor, trails, trade, expenses, outfitting, flora; tribal histories, witchcraft, savagery.

23. Africa Part 2
GEORGE E. HOLT, Castle View, Meriden, Conn. Covering Morocco; travel, tribes, customs, history, etc.

24. ★ Africa Part 3. Portuguese East Africa
R. W. WARING, Corunna, Ontario, Canada, covering trade, produce, climate, opportunities, game, wild life, travel, expenses, outfits, health, etc.

25. Africa Part 4. Transvaal, N. W. and Southern Rhodesia, British East Africa, Uganda and the Upper Congo
CHARLES BEADLE, Care Paul Tausig & Son, 104 E. 14th St., New York, N. Y. Covering geography, hunting, equipment, trading, climate, mining, transport, customs, living conditions, witchcraft, opportunities for adventure and sport.

26. ★ New Zealand, Cook Islands and Samoa
TOM L. MILLS, *The Feilding Star*, Feilding, New Zealand. Covering New Zealand, Cook Islands and Samoa. Travel, history, customs; opportunities for adventurers, explorers and sportsmen.

27. Australia and Tasmania
ALBERT GOLDIE, care of H. E. ROBERTS, 55 John Street, New York, N. Y. Covering customs, resources, travel, hunting, sports, politics, history.

STANDING INFORMATION

For general information on U. S. and its possessions, write Sup't of Public Documents, Wash., D. C., for catalog of all Government publications.

For the Philippines and Porto Rico, the Bureau of Insular affairs, War Dep't, Wash., D. C.

For Alaska, the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For Hawaii, Hawaii Promotion Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, H. I. Also, Dep't of the Interior, Wash., D. C.

For Cuba, Bureau of Information, Dep't of Agrl., Com., and Labor, Havana, Cuba. Or J. V. Knight, Director, Republic of Cuba News Bureau, Woolworth Building, New York.

For Central and South America, John Barrett, Dir. Gen., Pan-American Union, Wash., D. C.

For R. N. W. M. P., Comptroller Royal Northwest Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can., or Commissioner, R. N. W. M. P., Regina, Sask. Only unmarried British subjects, age 22 to 30, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs., accepted.

For Canal Zone, the Panama Canal, Wash., D. C.

For U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries, the Dep't of Com., Wash., D. C.

★ (*Enclose addressed envelope with 3 cents in stamps NOT attached*)

The Jivero Indians

Question:—"Who and what are the Jivaro Indians of Peru? That is the tribe that are supposed to cure the human heads, shrinking them to a very small size. Please give all information available regarding ethnological features, language, location, etc. Nearest villages occupied by civilized or semi-civilized people. What is known of the manner in which heads are cured. Are they the heads of their own people, or of their enemies? In fact, all the details known to the world today. The encyclopedia is very vague on the matter." —M. J. CONWAY, Balboa Heights, C. Z.

Answer, by Mr. Young:—Referring to yours of November 17th, I have been holding this answer to try and dig up further information, in addition to what I already knew, regarding these ferocious fellows. I have dug through a mass of books in the public libraries in New York and far from being further enlightened I'll be danged if I don't doubt the authenticity of a great deal of alleged "dope" which came to my hand in these halls of learning.

So I shall have to fall back on what I know to be O. K. Strange to say, the first Jivero—or Jivaro—Indian I saw was right here in Balboa. Ralph Johnson on his walk from Iquitos, Peru, to a point on the Guayaquil & Quito R. R. in Ecuador came upon a deserted village strewn with headless corpses and when passing a hut heard the moaning of some one and entered to investigate.

These moans were those of a small boy, about eight years of age, and somehow or other he had been overlooked in the slaughter, or had been deserted by his people in their quick "getaway." Ralph took the lad by the hand and led him away. He went to work for the G. & Q. for a time as conductor and afterward came to the Zone where he went to work as I. C. C. conductor, and was later yard-master at Gorgona and Balboa Junction in 1912.

The boy was about twelve years of age at this time but could speak no word of either Spanish or English, partly because Ralph did not want him to learn, for he claimed that when his slave learned to speak he would soon get wise and leave him. Ralph had married a well-to-do lady of Ecuador and the little Jivero fellow was both company and help for her. They lived in Panama, up-stairs over a place I have forgotten the name of, and I visited Ralph there many times, partly to study his strange captive and partly to chew the rag with Ralph, who was a first-rate fellow and a dyed-in-the-wool, Typical Tropical Tramp.

He was also interested in finding out what he could from the boy regarding his people and their manner of living. He had learned a great many words from the Jivero and, with these and with what sign language we could both muster, we found out what I now believe to be more nearly the true facts than those given in the books I have been reading. For instance, the books say

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that these people poison their blow-gun darts with a concoction made of roots, barks, and as a final dose, the body of a poison ant, and that they carry this poison in a rawhide sack.

This boy not only showed us that they made the poison from putrid liver, kept for weeks for the purpose, but we got a liver from the butcher and he allowed it to rot out on Ralph's back porch to the extreme disgust and consternation of Ralph's native neighbors. The boy, with our help, made a blow-gun. This was done by getting a piece of hardwood about nine feet long, splitting it in two, working a groove in each piece and then lashing the gun together with rawhide.

The darts were about the size of lead-pencils sharp at one end and with a small piece of cotton wrapped around the other to make the "compression" good. You would be surprised to know how far you can shoot one. The boy poisoned some of the darts and, although I never really tried them on any game, I know that the boy and Ralph did on birds and small game near Panama. The quick infection of the putrid liver did the work. I have given this information to some of the best surgeons in the country, including Dr. Samuel of Louisville, Ky., and they all agree that the poison of this rotted liver would be quick and deadly from what they have observed in operations. The darts barely draw blood, and when hunting animals for food the victim often does not know he has been struck until he falls dead.

As to the heads they dry: this boy showed by gestures and what few words Ralph could understand that after cutting off the head they go into the woods and get several herbs and roots and make a brew. What these herbs and roots are we could not find out, for the boy could find none in the woods near Panama City. They fill the head with this concoction which softens the bones, then they cut out a round piece from the top of the skull leaving the scalp intact.

There was something just after this that I could not savvy, it had to do with putting something inside the head and shaking for a long time. Then the boy showed us that they placed this head, together with others, in a large pile of sand. A fire was kept burning around this pile of sand for months, day and night, until the heads had dried and shrunk. Then they were taken out and hung in the hut of the owner.

He also showed us that they sew the lips together with a sinew to keep the brew from leaking out. All of the heads I have seen show two tiny marks on either lip where this was done. The hair, eyebrows, lashes, etc., are intact, but appear out of size to the extreme smallness of the features which are as hard and dry as a bone. I have, personally, seen a great many of these heads in Ecuador and Peru.

One man I know had sixty of them. Among these were heads of full-grown men and women as small as oranges and some even smaller. I hesitate to say that I saw some that appeared to be of grown people, as small as baseballs. This man told me a story of a head brought into Guayaquil and exposed for sale, which was of a white man, a German, and that many people recognized it and that afterward this same head was used in Germany in a will-contest case in the German courts. This is probable, and possible, but I can not say how true it is.

These people are cannibals, the man who has killed the enemy usually reserving the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet for his own choice parts of the body. The flesh is roasted, fried, and stewed. They only kill their enemies, which they do in a good many ways, from setting blow-guns and bows to poisoning the water above their villages with berries and herbs or trapping them in pits. Strange to say, none of these poisons harm the flesh for eating purposes.

Every male has a string of dried heads hanging from the rafters of his hut and it is from raids made by Peruvian and Ecuadorian rubber, and gold, hunters that these heads brought to Guayaquil and Lima are procured. There are many exposed for sale on the Malecon, in Guayaquil, and I have no doubt, should you desire so gruesome a relic, you could get one of the G. & Q. employees, who leave Balboa frequently, to buy one for you and send it up by one of the crew or officers of one of the steamship lines plying between there and Guayaquil. One could be bought for sixty sucres, or thirty dollars U. S. in 1913.

About the best account I have ever read of these people, although it was lacking in details, was in *Lima Today* an English publication of Lima, Peru. I think the date of the number containing this account was May, 1911. The illustrations, taken from photos of the heads, were very good indeed. I believe you could get this particular number by taking the matter up with the editor and getting him to send it to you.

In my rambles in the high countries of Ecuador and Peru I always made it a point to detour the country of the Jiveros and although I have seen a great many semi-civilized ones who had partly made friends with the Quichuas and Spanish people of these countries I was never actually in a village of the pure savages—and that's not all, either. I sure can run when I get scared, and whenever a Jivero puts for me and figures on picking my bones for lunch I'll show him how I can reach up and get my hat and go.

However, being that you have started me on this thing I am going to dig out the genealogy, ethnology, language, etc., for you and me, and perhaps for the readers of *Adventure*. At any rate, I shall keep you advised as I run across information I am sure about, and also, I would be glad of any help you can give me in this line. I have just read Lange's "In the Amazon Jungle," and what he says about the head-hunters does not seem to jibe with what I have found out, and there are parts of his narration that do not seem to ring true, and yet it may all be true.

I know a man who spent several years studying the Indians of Peru, Brazil and Ecuador at close hand, and although he has never written anything for publication I am going to try to get in touch with him on this subject as soon as I can find out from his relatives where he is located at present. By profession he is a chemist and was interested in the vegetable poisons used by these people.

Work in the Maine Woods

Question:—"Reading your name in this month's *Adventure Magazine* I am writing you to ask you to help me.

"I am a young man 21 years of age, a lover of the

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open, and especially nature. I am afflicted, losing my hearing ten years ago through a spell of sickness. Have worked at machinist trade since I left school but I found inside employment did not agree with me so I managed to get work at Seaside Park last May. I am gathering sea grass, and our season will end with another month.

"My health is excellent, and I am very strong; I might say, an athlete. I am worrying about the time when I shall have to go to Philadelphia again to work inside.

"I am a good horseman.

"Now, if you can help me by getting me a position in your territory, I will prove my ability as a good man and be grateful to you."—WM. E. CAYA, Seaside Park, N. J.

Answer, by Dr. Hathorne:—I think there is no doubt but a good husky young man could find plenty of work out-of-doors in Maine. There is a great demand for men for the woods, and some of them are making high wages, cutting pulp wood. Then there is a demand for teamsters.

Wages run from $2 per day, and board, upward. Many men are making $5 and $6 per day cutting pulp wood. In this sort of work I don't think your infirmity would interfere with your getting a job, but most men hiring help prefer to see the man before they engage him.

There is also somewhat of a demand for help on farms, but the wages would not compare with those paid in the woods.

I am sending you a list of agents who hire help of this kind, and you might write them.

Lumberjacks in the South

Question:—"I am in perfect health, have a fair knowledge of the woods, canoeing and hunting; have worked at most everything and am not afraid of the hardest work. I would like to know if there are places in Kentucky or Tennessee where a couple of fellows could buy a small piece of land, build a cabin, and get some work and enough hunting to keep from starving. I am interested to know if the people in the States mentioned are like your stories, which I like very much. How much would two fellows need to start? What wages do lumberjacks get?"— —— ——, Oldtown, Maine.

Answer, by Mr. Liebe:—Land may be bought very nearly anywhere in the States you mention; and, of course, you could very easily build a cabin on it. The cost would be very little in out-of-the-way places. You might possibly buy a bit of land already cleared, with a cabin already built.

Work in the hills is rarely found save in logging outfits, sawmills, and mines. There is no regular scale of wages for timberjacks. I think you could count, however, on being paid anywhere from $30 to $60 per month, with board and lodging. As to the hunting, you would need to buy a license and observe the closed seasons, or be liable to fine. Write the State game-warden at the State's capital city for copy of game laws. Hunting in the mountains, by the way, is not considered very good in my section. The bigger game, turkey and bear, etc., is pretty scarce. However, there are always squirrels. In certain sections, there are always raccoon, opossum, and woodchuck.

Concerning the amount of money you would need, I don't know what to say. If it were me, I'd take what I happened to have by me, and go to some logging outfit and get a job. You can earn enough money before very long to buy a bit of land. Here are the addresses of two logging and sawmilling outfits that recently advertised for timberjacks, teamsters and track-men: Champion Lumber Company, Crestmont, N. C.; and Stony Creek Lumber Company, Fort Blackmore, Va. An iron-ore mining company at Cranberry, N. C., wanted men not so long ago, and so did a zinc-mining company at Embreeville, Tenn. . . . Glad you liked my stories. The characters are as nearly like the real people as I am able to make them.

Roughing It in the North

Question:—"Will you kindly tell me how men take care of their bodies in the extreme cold weather up North?

"This has always been a wonder to me, after reading of a man or men traveling through a blizzard for a week, or with the temperature down to 40 or less, and no shelter."—R. H. MARSH, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Answer, by Mr. Solomons:—No question that you could ask would be more interesting to me, for it expresses a character of misconception of cold countries which I should like to help dispel.

The fact is, there isn't anything you can't do at 50 below in the open wind. But the colder it is and the more the wind the quicker you've got to do it, especially with regard to the extremities. You could expose your fleshy portions—thighs, calves, arms, abdomen, if provided with a little swathing of fat—for quite some time before the surface would begin to freeze, but the hands and feet, and of course the ears, nose, chin, cheek-bones and the like, would suffer in a shorter time. The reason for the time that you have is simply that the process of driving the blood away from the surface is, physiologically, a rather involved process and can not be accomplished in a moment. Put a bucket of water at drinking temperature out into the 50-below weather and you will be surprised at how long it takes to freeze. The water is a poor conductor of heat and therefore the heat in it is conducted out and away into the "eager air" slowly. A chunk of iron in the same space of time acquires the outer temperature with celerity. That is to say, it has long lost its indoor temperature, while the water is still in the process.

Now the body is not only largely fluid—and the balance of the tissues are of a highly non-conducting character—but the cold increases the rapidity of the circulation and new warmth comes to the aid of the cooling surface parts that are exposed. For both these reasons the freezing process is quite slow, as I have said.

While out-of-door life under frigid conditions is distinctly a craft requiring experience and aptitude, and the acquired craftsmanship enables a man or woman to be really quite comfortable and do everything necessary to live out of doors efficiently and accomplish the work in hand, yet even the tenderfoot seldom experiences any real hardship or danger in eating, sleeping, washing, and generally attending to his creature needs. He is awkward and uncomfortable, freezes his finger-tips or toe-ends, cusses frequently and all that, but nothing serious results. The Arctic-wise habitant, on the other

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hand, deports himself with the ease and calm of the Summer vacationist in the balmy zones. Knowledge and experience, with their acquired shifts and expedients, account for the difference.

The dangers in out-of-door Winter life in the far North are quite simple. They may be summed up in the statement that one must avoid depletion of strength and body fuel. Long hours of travel, especially if the body becomes damp from outer moisture or perspiration from within must be followed by rest in dry clothes or blankets or before a fire—a poor substitute—and one MUST GET FOOD, and warming food, at that. Not hot food, but carbohydrate food.

The body temperature must be maintained. That is the problem in a word, and the whole craft of the thing, running the gamut of clothing, food, shelter, and means of getting over the ground, is concerned singly toward that end. Contact, actual or relative, by exposure or thinly covered body surface, with the low outside temperature must be prevented as much as possible, without at the same time preventing circulation from body to outer air. Then air in motion must be prevented from getting at the body—hence wind-proof fabrics. And lastly heat losses from muscular and organ activity and heat losses from conduction through the imperfectly non-conducting clothing MUST BE offset by the taking in and metabolic changing into utilizable calories of sufficient food substance. And there you are. The practical details, are, of course, legion.

It is a weakness of the fiction writers—a weakness that I have tried to steer clear of myself—to picture Alaskan and Northern Canadian life as rather fearful and dangerous. The thermometer seldom registers anything lower than sixty or seventy below zero when the hero is out heroing, and when he spits derisively at the threat of the villain his saliva dents the frozen trail and bounds off like a pebble or a nugget.

In point of fact the fifty-below days are few, and they are almost always still. That makes outdoor life easier than at zero in a strong wind. And when you put your freshly cooked pork and beans out to freeze so you can chuck it into your sled in a lump it takes an exasperatingly long time—usually some hour or two or three. We put cases of potatoes or eggs in a robe and carry them for several days on an open sled without their freezing. Alaska conditions as to cold are really no worse than inhabited Canada not very far from Canada's southern boundary. The main difference is the longer Winter.

One may advisedly fear all sorts of things in arctic life—monotony, uncongenial company, scarcity of gold—that he can get hold of—or what not. But he need never fear the cold. A little care and common sense even from the start is all he needs. And unless he is already an invalid he is bound to feel fit and fine all the time. Nature's sanitaria are in the very cold countries. In my ten years of continuous living up there I practically never saw sickness.

You speak of "no shelter." There are few situations in which no shelter can be obtained. A dry nook out of the wind is ample shelter—even without bedding, for a time. With it, and a little "grub" such a nook is permanent shelter. White children play out of doors all day on the Arctic Ocean, in practically all kinds of weather in Winter time.

Northwest California Game

Question:—"Am interested in northwestern California from Vallejo and Napa Valley north to Oregon. What kind of game can be found here? Isn't it true that some parts of this section are hard to beat for climate?"—J. I. FASSETT, Leavenworth, Wash.

Answer, by Mr. Harriman:—Taking the territory mentioned, from Vallejo northwest to the Oregon line, you first strike Lake County, where you will find a good chance to hunt game. Then come Mendocino, Humboldt and Trinity, and, last, Del Norte.

Mendocino has some of the greatest of our forests, where the day seems like twilight on account of the big trees that shut off the light. It is always damp and steamy in the forests of Mendocino. It is a good place to hunt *felis concolor*, the cougar or mountain lion of the coast. This county collected bounty on 154 cougar in eight years eight months. Deer are plentiful. Bear occasional. Better bear ground in Plumas. Humboldt is like Mendocino in forestation, though hardly as damp.

Trinity is all mountains and is a game-country *par excellence*. There were 1,150 deer killed on Hayfork Mountain in one year, according to records of forest service. The mountain is forty miles long.

Del Norte is an interesting county from the fact that here you find the mouth of the Klamath River, one of the most beautiful places on the coast. Also, from the fact that along the north side lies one of the wonderful redwood groves, close up to the Oregon line.

This whole section abounds in deer, and there are many small animals such as foxes, coyotes, coon, ringtail cats, civet cats, skunks, mink, etc. Trapping season runs four months from November 1. License fee, $1.

You will not get the mountain scenery along this route as you will farther east, but you will see some mighty interesting country.

The climate is not a severe one anywhere, but it gets rather nippy in Winter nights. The climate suits me best in Trinity, as it is far enough from the ocean to clear the fogs.

Canadian Northwest Ranches

Question:—"I've heard that there are still a few large ranches in Alberta and British Columbia. Is this correct? If so, where are they? Is there any chance for a greenhorn to get a job? What are the usual wages? I can handle horses, am fairly strong, and accustomed to outdoor work."—————, Iron Hill, Md.

Answer, by Mr. Carson:—I can not speak with any great amount of certainty regarding the wages paid ranch hands in the Canadian Northwest but you would be reasonably sure of getting from $40 to $50 per month and found.

The qualifications consist of good health, a fair amount of strength and plenty of willingness.

Your best plan would probably be to go to either Winnipeg, Regina or Alberta, as these are distributing points for respectively, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. There would be no difficulty in obtaining employment as a ranch hand at any of these places.

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There are plenty of the big ranches left and will be for as long as we will have any occasion for them. In Saskatchewan, for example, there are over 155,000,000 acres of land, of which less than 13,000,000 are under cultivation. When one chews on this fact for a while he comes to the conclusion that this country is not really crowded as yet.

I might add that right here in western Washington there is a big demand for ranch hands at from $45 to $55 per month, a much more salubrious climate and no necessity or inducement to leave the very best country on earth. While you are at it *you might chew on this fact* for a while.

Work in the Hudson's Bay Company

Question:—"Would you please give me a few particulars about Hudson's Bay Co. posts.

"1—Where is their head office in Canada?

"2—Do they employ one for posts without having experience in that line?

"3—Would you give me the names of a few Northern posts?"—LOUIS C. WILLIAMS, Everett, Wash.

Answer, by Mr. Sangster:—Answering your "AA" inquiry regarding employment in the H. B. Co.

1—Their head office is in Winnipeg, Man., Can. Write Mr. C. Chipman, Chief Fur Commissioner, H. B. Co., Winnipeg, who can best afford you full particulars as to employment either in their head office or at their various posts.

2—They usually require trained men to take charge of their Northern fur posts; possible to be placed as a clerk under such a Factor, I believe, however, without experience.

3—They have many fur posts all through British Columbia along the coast of Hudson's and James Bays, in Northern Ontario, Northern Quebec and the Labrador. Thus such posts as at Ft. Stuart, B. C., Athabasca Landing, Alta., LePas, Man., Ft. Nelson. Moose Factory, Flying Post, Rupert's House, Waswanapac, Pointe Bleue, Missinable, Graham, Abitibi Lake, Hamilton Inlet, Labrador, Ft. George, etc.

However, as above suggested, write direct to the Winnipeg head offices for special details. I am unable to state whether they are seeking clerks or assistants more than usual just now or not.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible.* All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right, in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada.

ADVENTURE HAS FOUND ONE MAN OUT OF EVERY FIVE OF ALL THOSE ASKED FOR DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS

GERRICK, GEORGE. About 36 years old, dark hair and eyes. Had leg broken by breaking of fly-wheel of engine of Eldorado Lumber Co. sometime before July 8, 1903. Last heard from in Goldfield, Nev., April, 1908. Any information concerning him will be gratefully received by his mother—Address MRS. KATE GERRICK, 25 First Ave., Albany, N. Y. or his sister.—Address MRS. MARY COUTH, 42 East Main St., Johnstown, N. Y.

LESSNAW, JOE. Left home in Detroit about 12 years ago. Would like to hear from him or some one who knows him.—Address brother, GEORGE J. LESSNAW, 126 Huron St., Detroit, Michigan.

RELATIVES of JOHN PALMER, who came from Kentucky to Kansas in 1882 (then 32 years old).—Address LOY J. PALMER, 728 Rural St., Emporia, Kansas.

BRANSCOMBE, EARL. Left home in July, 1916. Would be glad to receive any information regarding him. Last heard of in Haywards, Calif.—Address CECIL J. PETTIT, Co. M. 32nd Inf., Schofield Bks. Hawaii.

Please notify us at once when you have found your man.

MCGWOWN, MACKIE. Ex-member of the U. S. S. *Michigan*, later of the B. K. Detachment, League Island, Pa., or any other member who knows Curley of the mess-hall write to your old pal and comrade, Dan.—Address WM. H. GUTHRIE, P. O. Box 54, Bayard, West Va.

VINSON, EDWARD. Last heard from in Los Angeles, Cal. about 15 years ago. Is blind in right eye. Any information would be appreciated by his sister.—Address MRS. ROSA FANNING, Southwest City, Mo.

DEVERS, L. W. Last heard from in Fort Dodge, Iowa, in Winter of 1912 and 1913. Very important.—Address O. T. MARKEL, 141 Walnut St., Milton, Pa.

BRANOCK, RAY. Was with me in Montana during the Summer of 1915. Slim, weighs about 145; tattoo on both arms. Please write at once; would like to explain all. No danger.—Address ED MAHONEY, 1427 West Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Illinois.

Inquiries will be printed three times, then taken out. In the February issue all unfound names asked for during the past two years will be reprinted alphabetically.

OSBORN, LESTER E. Age 15 years and 9 months. January 1, 1910, he disappeared from his mother's home on Hill and Cal. Sts., Los Angeles, California. His description: large and tall, light-brown hair, fair complexion, hazel eyes and a mark on crown of head. Your mother has never been against you and is dying to see her precious boy and wants him to come back to her at once or write her.—Address MRS. JESSIE M. OSBORN, Los Angeles, Calif., General Delivery.

MOLLENHAUER, PERCY C. and ORTON A. Last heard of at Gull Lake and Moose Jaw, Sask., Canada, in the early part of 1912. Any one knowing anything of their whereabouts please write their sister.—Address MRS. EINAR FARCH, 3017 4th Avenue, So. Billings, Montana.

MEMBERS of *Utah's* old signal gang. Also men in Russian transport service with me.—Address A. E. SHEKEY, 334 Bowen St., Oshkosh, Wis.

LACY, JAMES E. Last heard of in Denver, Colorado. 1915. Ex-carrier Troop E. 6th Cav. Jan., 1912, until July, 1914. First enlistment done in Troop G. C. Cav. and discharged Sgt.—Address WM. H. GUTHRIE, P. O. Box 54, Bayard, West Va.

BUTTS, CHESTER H. Black hair and eyes; 21 years old. Last heard of in St. Louis, Mo., 1911.—Address MRS. ETHEL BUTTS, 409 5th Ave., East Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

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WHITLOCK, GEORGE W. (Sticks). Former Rough Rider (now pensioner) at one time with Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Tailor by trade. Last heard from some years ago in Oregon selling mining-stock. Native of Pennsylvania. Your old pal "Spot the Sailor" inquires.—Address G. LESTER AUMIC, 10 Vassar St., Schenectady, N. Y.

Inquiries will be printed three times, then taken out. In the February 3d issue all unfound names asked for during the past two years will be reprinted alphabetically.

GAMBRALL, THEODORE CHAS. Native of Baltimore, Md. (Sister still living there, married name forgotten.) Last employed by New Haven R. R. Jan., 1917. Left Bronx then, moved to Paterson, N. J. Tall, light-blue eyes, blond complexion. Please communicate at once.—Address ALBERT C. FORREST, 234 Charles Ave., Port Richmond, S. I.

PIERCE LEIGHTON. Last heard from in Ogden, Utah. Am sure I could interest him in a proposition.—Address FRANK P. BRUXTON, Ogden, Utah, care of Grant Hotel.

ATTENTION Boys of the 213th O. S. Bat. C. E. F. American Legion. Write to one of the bunch that was at Camp Borden, Ont. I would like to hear from you. Especially JOE VOGEL from Milwaukee, Wis.; don't you remember how we enlisted and where at. Write soon.—Address JAMES MORRIS, 13th C. 3rd Platoon, Ft. Thomas, Ky.

GOODWILL, CLIFTON C. Brother. Last heard from in Toronto, Can., in April, 1913, at which time he said he was going to travel for the Canadian General Electric Co. Age 38 years. Weight when last seen about 190 pounds. Communicate with brother.—Address HARRY C. GOODWILL, Wallingford, Conn.

THE following have been inquired for in full, in either the First April or Mid-April issues of *Adventure*. They can get name of inquirer from this magazine:

ANDERSON, ALEX.; Brown, Berry; Carrington, Don K.; Davidson, Julius; Diggs, John W.; Edwardes, Samuel; Evans, Wille; Goodacre, Leon; Hargett, Fred L.; Hicky; Larsen, Larence; Lee, Leeland and Bennett; Magnus, Alf.; Miller, William Gustaf; Pool, E. M.; Pringle, John A., Raymond, W. L.; Rogers, Athure; Ross, David H.; Smith, James; Stanton, Henry A.; Stevenson, Alexander M.; Wargo, Joe; Warren, Harry C.; Watkins, O. V.; Watts, Earl L.; Williams, Thomas Jefferson; Witter, L. P.; Witter, Lula A.; Witter, Lillian M.

MISCELLANEOUS—Mr. McDonald, Chief Engineer, or any of Engine Room gang of tank steamer *Montana*.

HASTLAR GAL BREATH; Ruth Gilfillan; Lee, Hays, Jack P. Robinson.

NUMBERS L. T, 284, C 293, W. 311, W. 312, L. T. 343. Please send us your present address. Letters forwarded to you at addresses given us do not reach you.—Address HARRY ERWIN WADE, care *Adventure*.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

Of the twelve stories in the Mid-May number out on April 18th, three will be complete novelettes and seven short stories. Besides the two mentioned in the ad. on page 2, you will find:

The Boss of Lonesome Lake
A Complete Novelette *By Arthur James Hayes*

A story of the North country—the lumber country—and of the curious feud existing between the Seven Pines and Lonesome Lake outfits.

The Quest of Gaimar the Grim
By Farnham Bishop and Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur

Another tale of old Sicily, in which *Gaimar* presses his suit for the hand of the *Lady Fulvia*—but in an unusual way.

Arab *By Roy P. Churchill*

On to a United States warship this story will take you; again you will meet *Dick Reasoner*, this time solving his problem with a four-footed assistant.

Whole Hog or None *By Clarence L. Cullen*

It is a queer thing—gambling, horserace-betting. Even the old experienced ones are sometimes nipped—even *Detective-Sergeant Lanigan* was not immune.

Hearts in the Ring *By Stanley Shaw*

A story of the circus—a peep behind the scenes, into the dressing-rooms, even into the hearts of the performers.

Hidden Trails *Conclusion*
By William Patterson White

Johnny Ramsay has laid his plans well. Now he starts to bag the road-agents, but the round-up comes in so swiftly that even he is bewildered.

The Blindness of Quill McHenry
By G. A. Wells

Quill McHenry is far from blind ordinarily, but go with him into that cabin in the valley and see if you could see the matter differently.

U. S. A. *By Gordon Young*

At Manila this story takes place, in 1898—a fitting time and place to end for good the antagonism between two young ensigns of the conquering American fleet.

Clean Crazy *W. C. Tuttle*

Cleanliness may be next to godliness, but *Telescope Tolliver* and *Henry Peck* want none of it. You will agree with them, that Tin-Cup Creek is a good stream to keep out of.

Mister Cassidy *A Complete Novelette*
By David Douglas

Cassidy is the kind of man you meet one time in a hundred—this time in the hold of a tramp steamer, firing the boiler. But you will remember him.

MID-MAY ADVENTURE

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A Story You Will Never Forg

"I have left out of this account much that was told and have confined my statements to proved and admitted facts."

Brand Whitlock

THE truth of the most dependable account of German atrocities is insured by this brief foreword over the signature of the American Minister to Belgium.

His is the story of the agony of a light-hearted, peace-loving people, under the almost incredible tyranny of a merciless invader bent on thorough and pitiless destruction.

He reveals the cunning of a highly organized war machine that prepared in advance its excuses, apologies and alibis, while dealing out relentless oppression in scoffing disregard of any law of God or man.

Brand Whitlock, who saw the whole black history from December, 1913, to the present hour, tells the naked truth with the power of a skilled writer whose eyes have looked on unspeakable horror and cruel death. His terrific indictment is built up of incident upon incident of rapine and devastation, of wanton destruction and unquenchable blood lust.

Mr. Whitlock's position as representative of a neutral power brought him into contact with both victim and oppressor. It enables him to explain the utter ruthlessness of Prussian militarism and the point of view of its agents. His intimate, personal story of what he alone of all living Americans knows, makes Belgium's awful fate a vivid reality.

You can not read this heart-wringing picture of human tragedy without taking satisfaction in the thought that America is helping to right such wrongs.

Brand Whitlock's account of German atrocities in Belgium begins in the April issue, which is fully illustrated from rare photographs and from cartoons by Louis Raemaekers, the great Dutch war artist.

Everybody's Magazine

April Issue, at the News-stands March 23d

EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE
New York City

Adventure, 1st May

You may enter my subscription to *Everybody's* for one year beginning with the April issue. I enclose..... for $1.50.

Name .....

Address .....

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If you have to figure close, keep track of car-fares and go slow on lunches; if you have to do without pleasures—the many things that make life worth while—we can help you.

We have solved the extra-money problem for Mr. Webster and hundreds of other men. By looking after the new and renewal subscriptions for *Adventure* and *Everybody's Magazine*, in their spare time, they earn $25.00 to $125.00 a month. You can do the same.

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In the next six months a half-million orders for Ridgway publications will be placed. Thousands will come to us direct because our staff of representatives is not large enough to handle all the business. You can easily increase your income by forwarding the orders from your vicinity. Let us solve the extra income problem for YOU.

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